

THE NATIONAL AND ENGLISH REVIEW

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EPISODES OF THE MONTH

THE EDITOR

BUTLER'S LATEST DOSE

JAMES RAMSDEN

SCELBA AND THE SICILIAN SCANDAL

GAVIN MAXWELL

EVE OF THE POLL IN AUSTRALIA

STANLEY MOORE

QUIET RULER

SIR EDWARD BOYLE, Bt.

LONDON GOLD MARKET

JOHN B. WOOD

AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS BY MICHAEL FABER, DENYS
SMITH, EDWARD HYAMS, ERIC GILLETT, JOHN C. TREWIN,
EARL OF BIRKENHEAD, MILWARD KENNEDY, AND ALEC
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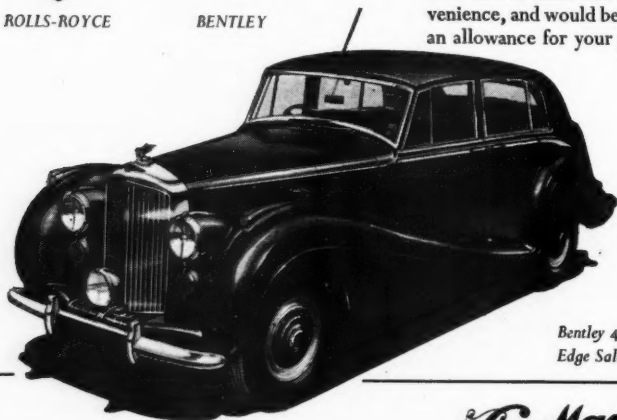


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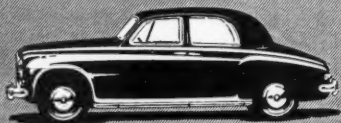
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EPISODES OF THE MONTH

ONCE again the thoughts of mankind are turned hopefully towards Geneva. At the *Palais des Nations* a Conference is beginning, at which it will be seen whether or not the Communist and non-Communist sectors of the world can find some practical formula for co-existence—the test being in this case not Germany, but Korea and Indo-China. For the first time representatives of Communist China will be taking part in a top-level political discussion with those who have been their most implacable opponents. This is in itself a useful development, and some good may come—as at Berlin—from secret, unofficial contacts. But it would be foolish to expect from the Conference any spectacular change in the world situation. A change there may be—a subtle, tentative change, carefully concealed by propaganda on both sides. This is perhaps the best we can hope for. Meanwhile we must always remember that our success in negotiating, indeed our survival in the Cold War, depend upon the maintenance of Western strength and unity. We should therefore welcome the recent hydrogen bomb experiments which the Americans have been carrying out, and we should also be grateful that the present Republican Administration in the United States is no more isolationist than its predecessor. The occasional indiscretions of Mr. Dulles are much less important than his obvious loyalty and dedication to the cause of Western security.

No Abandonment of Indo-China—

THIS has been well illustrated by the support which he has given to the French in Indo-China. Whatever may be said of France's record of government and diplomacy in that most difficult region, one thing is certain; that it would have been folly to let the Chinese think the French would have to abandon Indo-China, because their Allies were not prepared to support them. The present regime may or may not be an example of "obsolete colonialism," but it is certainly preferable to the modern imperialism of China. If the Chinese were given cause to think that Indo-China was regarded as expendable by Western strategists, they would at once increase the scale of their assistance to Ho-Chi-Minh, and

there would be much less chance of fruitful bargaining at Geneva. The Americans have learnt one lesson from Korea, and learnt it well ; they have not repeated their mistake of leaving a vacuum for the Chinese to fill.

—But No Unlimited Intervention

THERE was, however, another lesson to be learnt from Korea, and it is to be hoped that the Americans are equally conscious of this. Withdrawal, or failure to intervene, may indeed be fatal, but excessive intervention may also have the most unpleasant consequences. In Korea the U.N. forces under General MacArthur advanced too far, and gave the Chinese an excuse for into "massive retaliation." The results of this were an unnecessary prolongation of the war and a much more serious political problem than might otherwise have existed. We cannot afford to commit ourselves to the total defeat of Ho-Chi-Minh, any more than we can attempt the unification of Korea under Syngman Rhee. In other words, limits must be set to our intervention, though these need not be publicly stated. The Chinese and their satellites should be shown beyond a doubt that they will not be allowed to dominate Indo-China; but they should also be given the opportunity to agree, without loss of face, to a compromise solution.

Partition Inevitable

IN Korea and Indo-China, as in Germany, we must accept the inevitability of partition. On this point American statesmanship may tend to falter. Of course there is much to be said for a clear-cut view of the world—black and white, "we" and "they," freedom versus slavery, Western democracy versus Communist tyranny. Though this view, when it is applied in detail, involves a measure of oversimplification, it is essentially true, and we should never adopt the cynical neutralist position to which our enemies and their dupes invite us.

But while retaining our grasp of principle, we must be careful not to lose all power of manœuvre. Our faith must be unshakable, but our methods must not be unduly rigid. We must realize that, unless we are prepared to embark upon a third world war—which is in fact what we are trying to avoid—we are bound to make some concessions to our enemies. In particular, there must be give-and-take in regard to disputed territory. It is better that one or two nations should be divided (especially when their unity is not in itself very desirable) than that the whole world should be devastated.

What of the Bomb ?

THIS naturally leads us to consider the hydrogen bomb, which has given rise to so much unintelligent comment. If Dr. Johnson were living at this hour, he would be telling us to clear our minds of cant on



Nothing like a breath of hydrogen to clear the air.

this subject. But unfortunately cant has been much in evidence, and it has emanated not only from Parliament and the Press (quarters from which it might have been expected to come) but also from the highest spiritual authorities. The hydrogen bomb has been represented to a largely indifferent, or only mildly disquieted, public as being a new moral problem, a challenge to the conscience of mankind. But in fact, as any thoughtful person can readily appreciate, there is no essential moral difference between the use of a hydrogen bomb and the use of a bow and arrow. If war itself is justifiable—and only pacifists maintain that it is wrong in all circumstances—then it must be justifiable to devise and develop the most effective weapons of war. And inasmuch as hydrogen bombs are more likely than bows and arrows to deter potential aggressors, the former may on the whole be regarded as more helpful than the latter, morally as well as physically.

Moral Problem Unchanged

Against this there is of course the familiar argument that an arrow strikes with more discrimination than a bomb; it can be aimed by one combatant at another, whereas bombs, and more especially hydrogen bombs, involve the wholesale massacre of civilians, including women and children.

This is perfectly true, and we would not deny that what is called "total war" is altogether more dangerous and disagreeable than warfare of the traditional kind. But we cannot admit that it is any more immoral. It might even be said that modern warfare, with all its frightfulness, had had a chastening effect upon the human race. Fighting has been stripped of its glamour and is seen for what it is—one of the worst expressions of human wickedness and folly. The weak and the innocent may now be under a graver threat than at any time in the past, but they have always been at the mercy of predatory foes; and as for women and children, even when they have not themselves been killed, they have always suffered from the death in war of husbands, fathers and breadwinners.

Modern war, with its total impact and incredible destructiveness, may in some ways compare unfavourably with the warfare of which we read in history books. But we must not forget that science, which has given us the hydrogen bomb, has also given us penicillin and many other comforting and life-saving inventions. And we must remember that the present age, in which war has become more terrible than ever before, has also produced a more general aspiration to peace than has ever before been known.

On balance, therefore, we insist that the hydrogen bomb should not be regarded as inherently more evil than any other weapon of war, not excluding the most primitive. The moral problem is unchanged.

EPISODES OF THE MONTH

Real Significance Overlooked

BUT while we cannot think of the bomb as a challenge to the conscience, we should certainly recognize it as a major challenge to the intellect. So far, it seems to us, there has been too much emotionalism and too little clear thought about the bomb, as a result of which its real significance has tended to be overlooked.

Now, we suggest, for the first time the whole world is threatened—great continental land masses like the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as small and densely populated areas like Great Britain. No Power can feel immune. Until now the Russians in particular have had the advantage that their main centres of industry were remote and inaccessible, and relatively hard to destroy by merely atomic attack. But the development of more powerful bombs, combined with the acquisition by the United States of bases in Pakistan, has brought even Siberia within the scope of possible annihilation; and a score or so of hydrogen bombs dropped upon strategically selected targets in the United States, by aircraft flying fast and high from bases at the Eastern extremity of the Soviet Union, could virtually paralyse American industry.

At last, therefore, we may have reached the point at which the use of these stupendous weapons, at any rate in the opening phase of hostilities, is unlikely. There is always the danger that they might be used later on in desperation, but it is at least some relief to feel that there is now less chance of a world war beginning with the vaporization of London.

Greater Need for "Conventional" Armaments

THE obvious corollary of this is that "conventional" armaments are now resuming their former importance. Since it is improbable that a war of the future will be fought in terms of atomic or hydrogen bombs, it is necessary to prepare for a succession of "incidents" (like Korea, Indo-China, Malaya or Kenya) in which the main elements will be infantry and supporting arms. This does not mean that the production of hydrogen bombs is unnecessary; only if there is at least a balance of power in regard to these and similar weapons can we be at all hopeful that they will not be used. If possible, the Western Alliance should retain, and be known to retain, a marked superiority in this respect. To do so will be a very expensive task, and keeping up to date with other weapons, such as guided missiles, will also be very costly.

No Drastic Defence Cuts Possible

WHEN we consider the dual nature of our Defence responsibilities—"conventional" preparedness and development of the latest weapons—we cannot understand the reasoning of those who think large-scale cuts in Defence expenditure will be possible. It is always tempting

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for democratic politicians to spend less on Defence and more on the so-called Social Services; but it is a temptation which they must somehow resist, if democracy is to survive.

Our first article this month is on the Budget, and it has been written by our friend and colleague James Ramsden. With much of what he has to say we are in full agreement; (in particular we endorse his remarks about capital investment in the private sector of industry). But we are frankly disturbed by his apparent readiness to see cuts in Defence expenditure and refusal to contemplate cuts in the Social Services. In fact we altogether deprecate the consideration of these two subjects in isolation. Defence is surely the greatest of all the Social Services. There can be no welfare without safety; national security is the first condition of social security. Of course there should be constant vigilance in the Service Departments, as in other Departments, to ensure that money voted is spent to the best advantage. We have no doubt that there is still plenty of scope for economy in every branch of the Government. But to suggest that large reductions can be made in the sums which are voted for Defence is, to our mind, dangerously perverse.

Two Anniversaries

THE month of April provided two important anniversaries—the fifth anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty and the fiftieth of the *Entente Cordiale*.

N.A.T.O. was brought into being under the stimulus of fear, and it remains the principal bastion in the world against Communist military aggression. It represents the supreme and providential fact that the New World is now actively concerned in the preservation of the Old; the Treaty was signed in Washington and we trust that it will never, so long as there is need for it, be disowned by Washington. Its purpose is not simply anti-Communist and military; it is an alliance of nations who are in many ways like-minded, and who are certainly at one in their desire for peace. It is to be hoped that those nations and territories of Asia, whose peoples wish to live peacefully and not to be Communized, will before long be joined together in a similar working partnership.

Friendship with France

THE *Entente Cordiale*, though it has to a large extent been superseded, in the purely military sense, by other and more comprehensive arrangements, is still a highly significant factor in our lives.

The French are our natural friends on the Continent of Europe. This is still not appreciated by some silly people, who maintain that we have more in common with other nations, even with the Germans. Of course there are many differences, some valuable or harmless, others painful and vexatious. (Among the latter, English food might be mentioned.)

EPISODES OF THE MONTH

But we share at least one characteristic which is of fundamental importance—respect for the individual and the family. In both countries this is combined with a measure of scepticism towards the State, though it may fairly be said that the French have carried this rather too far. We may also feel that in foreign affairs they are apt to be unrealistic and to think in terms of a France and a Europe which have ceased to exist. But when making these criticisms we must at all times be conscious of our own shortcomings, and of the great troubles which France has had to endure. We must also remember that, during the period of the *Entente*, the practical help which we have given the French has not always been adequate or timely.

For these reasons we must be very tolerant of their attitude towards E.D.C., springing as it does from a deep instinctive fear of German rearmament. And we must resolve that, whatever happens, we will not deprive them of our military support on the Continent. The German danger, like the Russian (with which it might once again become identified), cannot be offset by any skilfully drafted clauses; the only effective safeguard is the maintenance of strong Anglo-American forces in Europe.

Bevan Again

MR. ANEURIN BEVAN, that irrepressible (and rather irresponsible) politician, has chosen the issues of German rearmament and Allied policy on Indo-China to force a major show-down with the official Labour Party leadership. He has resigned from the Party's Parliamentary Committee and is now even freer than before to take his own line and bid for support among the rank-and-file of the Party, and in the trade unions.

As when he resigned from the Cabinet, he has chosen his ground carefully and with considerable acumen. Many Socialists, who would not otherwise follow him, will be prepared to back him on the two issues which he has selected. But Mr. Attlee is a formidable antagonist; his prestige in the Party is enormous and his tactical resource unrivalled. The struggle between these two able and sharply contrasted men is one of the most interesting, and perhaps also one of the most important, in the political history of our time.

Petrov and the Australian Election

WE publish this month an article from Australia, summarizing the main arguments in the electoral contest there, and assessing the strength and weakness of the principal Parties. It is clear that Mr. Menzies and his Government can boast of successful measures taken against the Communists, and the Prime Minister's personal handling of the Petrov incident, which has been headline news throughout the world and has led to the rupture of diplomatic relations between Australia and the Soviet Union, will probably be of further assistance to his Party.

This, of course, is only an incidental aspect of an event which may bring great advantages to the Allied cause in the field of counter-espionage. Another point which may be noted by the way is that the merits of Royal Commission procedure for investigation are not passing unobserved in the United States.

Conservatives and the Commonwealth

THE Conservative Party has for long regarded itself as the Imperial Party *par excellence*, and until recently this was a fairly easy title for it to assume, since the Opposition seemed dedicated to breaking up the British Empire. But the responsibilities of office, and closer acquaintance with the facts, have changed many Socialists into staunch Imperialists, and at the same time a healthy evolution has been occurring within the Tory Party. Many of its members, who in the past would have been content to say "We believe in the British Empire," and leave it at that, are to-day seeking, with genuine zeal, to improve their knowledge of the subject. Their efforts are being canalized and assisted by the recently formed Conservative Commonwealth Council, which has resolved itself into a number of groups and sub-groups, and is doing excellent work. The purpose of the Council is not only to provide ammunition wherewith to refute Left-wing heresies, but also, and above all, to stimulate interest in the Commonwealth for its own sake, without regard to partisanship.

Weekend in Lincolnshire

AS one instance of what is being done we should like to mention the Weekend Conference on the Colonial Empire which was held at Woodhall Spa, in Lincolnshire, at the beginning of April. This signalized the extension of the Conservative Commonwealth Council's activities to the East Midlands Area, and it owed much to the enthusiasm and organizing ability of Mr. Maurice Chandler, Conservative Education Officer for that Area.

The outstanding feature of this Conference was that the Conservatives who came to it were joined by Colonial students from no less than fifteen territories. The latter numbered just over a quarter of the total attendance and took a large part in the discussions; several of them also took the chair at meetings, when authoritative talks were given on each of the main Colonial regions. Between whiles they mixed freely with other delegates to the Conference and the atmosphere throughout was friendly and sympathetic.

There is no limit to the value of occasions such as this. They help to make the ideal of partnership a reality, and to convince our Colonial brothers that we in this country, to whichever Party we may belong, are linked with them in a great and progressive enterprise.

BUTLER'S LATEST DOSE

By JAMES RAMSDEN

A CHANCELLOR of the Exchequer, by the nature of his office, makes fewer excursions into the limelight than his other Ministerial colleagues. But when he does emerge, early each April, the build-up and staging of his appearance give him an unrivalled opportunity to exercise the art of what is now called public relations. The peculiarity in his case lies in the fact that his relationship to the public, his impact, is compounded of a whole series of private relationships affecting each one of us at a point where it seems to matter a great deal—our pockets. There he stands, at the despatch box or at the microphone, and there is a man's income, or his business, or his inheritance. Where will he strike? What sort of man is he? Much would seem to depend on that. The situation is so vivid that his personality, if he has one, is bound to project itself upon the minds of all interested parties in the strongest of colours. Dr. Dalton's indiscretion seemed to spring naturally from his self-confidence. Sir Stafford Cripps won us, in spite of ourselves, by his unfaltering austerity. This is Mr. Butler's third Budget. What impression has he left upon the public mind?

His strongest virtues are intellectual and may not have had an immediate effect upon the public. Appreciation of them has now permeated the politically conscious among his own Party, but not yet all its more emotional adherents. He grows upon one slowly. Those who understood thoroughly his mind and character, and who ploughed through their *Economic Survey*, 1954, will have felt no surprise at his "no change" Budget. I cannot claim to be among them,

though I read the *Survey*, and I hope I appreciate the Chancellor.

The fact is that experience of his predecessors has conditioned our minds to expect sweeping and sensational changes year by year. Socialist practice in political economy relied upon the Budget to lay down a set of rules and regulations for each section of the country's economic life, physical as well as fiscal. Following their theory, the Budget was the master-control, the tap-root from which the others all stemmed. And it was usually prolific. Thus the economy was subject to as tight regulations and restrictions as the wit of man could devise. This might not have mattered had everything gone according to the Budget-plan. But year by year outside factors produced fateful changes in the conditions at home and abroad for which the Budget had sought to provide, upon the assumption, or perhaps even in the hope, that such changes would not occur. And so the next year it was usually necessary at Budget-time to introduce equally violent changes in redress. In the Chancellor's favourite nautical metaphor, the helmsman had to give a great annual wrench to the wheel to set the ship back upon course, but soon after he had done so tide and wind would shift again, and another violent wrench was needed. Besides being a strain on the timbers these redressive measures were not always taken in time, and we came pretty near the rocks. At one such crisis the Conservatives were returned to power.

Mr. Butler's conception of the role of the Budget in a diverse and complicated economy, founded on free

enterprise, has been less presumptuous. He seems to envisage what one might call a supersensitive automatic pilot, self-adjusting to the extraneous stresses which, he well knows, will play upon his ship. Herein lies the difference between the Conservative and the Socialist approach to political economy. There is next to no dispute about the nature of the problems facing the country. Concern about the claims of mounting civil and defence expenditure is common to both Parties. Both recognize the balance of payments as fundamental to our difficulties at home and overseas. The same Treasury officials produce the same genus of statistical specimens which both sides examine through the microscope developed by Lord Keynes. Then comes the divergence. Socialism sets no limits to the attempt to legislate and control. Conservative practice seeks to dispense with controls in order to set as few limits as possible to the country's own inherent powers of self-adaptation and self-adjustment, under the spur of enterprise.

The cumulative effect of countless decisions, great and small, made by those engaged in business affairs, is thus relied upon, rather than a decision of the central Government expressed through a system of controls, to shape the country's course. The Budget can seek to make changes in the economic climate—to alter the data upon which these decisions are made, so as to guide the decisions themselves. But if these decisions are having the right cumulative result there will be no need to change the data. This the Chancellor broadly felt to be the case this year. The wide field over which no change has been made points to the wisdom of the steps he took last year. The few important changes underline last year's failures.

We shall look at these in more detail.

But first, how should the great voting public see Mr. Butler? What is his chief political characteristic? It is surely his consistency—a consistency founded on the Conservative principles which he himself has played the leading part in restating since 1945. He has not hesitated to apply these principles to the situation, with faith in their adequacy to meet it. This has earned the confidence of the public and deserves their respect.

Having, as it were, thrown this bouquet, let us pass on to the main features of the *Survey* and the Budget and see what difficulties, and perhaps deficiencies, attach to Mr. Butler's treatment of them this year, and last. He has been quite frank about the two main reasons for disquiet. They are the high and mounting level of Government expenditure and the disappointing lack of buoyancy in our exports.

As to the first, it is a traditional plank in the Tory platform to decry Government expenditure and seek to reduce it in order to make room for reductions in taxation. This used to be the stand taken by all Members of Parliament against the rapacities of the Executive, but the Socialist ones have mostly abdicated their province. The Chancellor is himself on the Left wing of his own party in this matter, since he quite rightly contemplates no compromise upon the policy of maintaining the Social Services unimpaired. Thus the aspect of the problem presented by the growth of civil expenditure which seemed uppermost in his mind, was that even the yield from the present structure of taxation might not be enough, if things happened to go wrong, to balance the enormous outgoings to which the Government is committed by agreed and necessary policies (including, of course, Defence). This year there will be no yield from E.P.L., no profit from the Ministry of

Food trading operations, and a sizable reduction in the amount of U.S. Aid. Income tax will balance these deficiencies by yielding more, but only if the level of industrial activity increases, as it has done during the past year. "If," to quote Mr. Butler's words, "trade slackens as a result of a recession, either here or overseas, the effects will be reflected in the Revenue figures, mainly in the following year. Thus a slackening in economic activity may also lead us to a Budget deficit."

These are grave words, and show by implication how dizzy is the balance which the economy has struck at its present height. For consider this—though we have not had to face a serious slump since the war, economists, since the work of Lord Keynes and others, are fairly confident of knowing what to recommend if a depression comes. Deficit Budgeting is the accepted remedy. But to seek to apply this remedy on top of an already large deficit produced by a short fall in revenue, itself the result of a depression, would produce an unparalleled strain.

In seeking relief against such a contingency, the Chancellor had to reconsider the claims of the Social Services and the Defence programme—now the two main heads of national expenditure. There is a widely shared feeling in the country, of which Mr. Assheton is the most able advocate, that enough could be done by means of administrative economies to bring about an effectual alleviation. What is demanded is a more thorough application of the "managing-director" technique. Much has been done by the Government on these lines, and more is possible; but it seems doubtful whether such measures, necessary though they are, and however well they are conceived, will be enough to offset the yearly increases in expendi-

ture which are dictated by considerations of policy, at any rate in the Social Services. Certainly the Chancellor himself does not think so. However, he is always very gentle with those who hold the other view, and I liked the way he made a point of relating this welfare expenditure, which in one way or another puts more into people's pockets, with what he takes out of them in the way of indirect taxation—on tobacco, beer, spirits and purchase tax. It was a subtle argument to appease those who still believe that through the Social Service system the State is giving away "summat for nowt."

If expenditure is to be reduced, or even the rise checked, there remains Defence. Here the Chancellor's words are striking, and deserve to be quoted: "During the coming year we must see to it that we obtain some definite relief from the Defence burden." Neither he nor the Financial Secretary elaborated this pregnant thought. He is sure to be pressed to say what he had in mind and if the phrase foreshadows any relaxation in our commitments he may need to do some pressing himself, upon his colleagues in the Cabinet, and upon Parliament. The possibilities are intriguing.

A word must be said about agriculture and food. This is subsidy spending. The total provision, (£325 m. in this year) does not approach that of the consumer food subsidies under the Socialist Government. The emphasis has been shifted and the main weight of payments will now be made to the farmers direct, in implementation of the guaranteed prices. But what remains is still "an open-ended Exchequer liability"; open, that is, to sudden growth if world cereal prices fell sharply and increased the need for market support at home. Some have said, "but you could limit

imports." Such a step would invite retaliation which our precarious export position does not admit. What the Chancellor has done is to give the first official intimation that there may be a return to the pre-war system which worked well in the case of milling wheat, of sharing the effect of changes in market prices between farmers and the importers and millers.

It is against this sombre picture of mounting State expenditure and its correlated problems that the Budget's omission of any increase in old age pensions and other benefits must be viewed. This was an undoubted surprise and, as I think, a mistake. These payments, which have never been nearer than 90 per cent. to the subsistence level envisaged by Beveridge are now running at about 70 per cent. of that rate. The Minister of National Insurance has let fall more than one calculated indiscretion, both in and out of Parliament, and the Government recently accepted a Motion about pensions which, coming just before the Budget as it did, added fuel to the fires of hope. Certainly the Chancellor's own exposition of the Revenue position strongly pleads the rightness of the stand he took. It is true, too, that the Government Actuary has begun his review of the whole National Insurance Scheme, the results of which ought to be seen before action is taken in any final form. The Philips Committee is also reviewing the position of Old People and will report. Both these facts point to action at the next Budget, maybe even in the Autumn.

But I personally regret that even an interim and transitional measure was not introduced for the relief of pensioners, and other beneficiaries of the State. I regret it for this reason. Both Parties are committed to the policy of full employment. In such conditions there is normally a steady increase in

industrial activity and in the national wealth, and wage rates go up, year by year, as they have done since 1939. If the economy is mishandled, as it was by the last Government, inflation accompanies full employment and prices rise more than incomes. Nobody is better off and pensioners and those on fixed incomes fare worst of all. But in the last two years things have been managed better. Sensible monetary policy at home has assisted the trend of prices abroad with the result that, despite a moderate increase in prices, there has in fact been an increase in real wages. The incentives provided by the 1953 Budget have turned out to be real incentives. It is estimated in the *Survey* that some two-fifths of the resulting increase in the national wealth has gone to consumers. But it has gone to those who have been able to earn higher incomes, and not to the pensioners. Conservative thinking encourages the creation of conditions in which full employment provides a "ladder of opportunity" up which all can climb. This has been done. The image, which is the Prime Minister's, is completed by the idea of a net, or mattress, of Social Security provisions, to take care of those who fall off. The two ideas are complementary. If, as seems the case, it is a concomitant of full employment that prices should tend to rise, even at the moderate rate of the last two years, then good government, besides seeing that wages rise more than prices, would seem bound to maintain the subsistence level of pensions. To my mind the inescapable conclusion is that the earning section of the community should be taxed in order to provide support for those who have ceased to work. I would regard this as more important than the contributory principle, though of course the two are not mutually exclusive, and one would

like to have both. Perhaps it is still not too late.

However, in politics what appears to be the straightforward course is not always practicable, and the Chancellor may have had other interrelated factors in mind when he decided against an increase in social benefits this time. Everyone knows and admits that the pensioners have a strong claim to a greater share in the resources available to consumers. It is equally well known, though in some quarters far from readily admitted, that wage-earners have had a full, indeed by comparison an over-generous share in the past year's increment in the national wealth. The Chancellor's refusal of the pensioners would thus underline the gravity of any intervention the Government might feel impelled to make in opposition to claims for higher wages in the ensuing year. (Members of Parliament will have noted this already!) However this matter is handled—and our much prized methods of free bargaining make it tricky for the Government to intervene—what is certain is that wages must not increase this year unless productivity can be made to rise much more rapidly than it did in 1953. The normal increase will not be adequate justification. It will be needed for another purpose. As the Chancellor said: "any increase in productivity should show itself . . . in the form of lower prices." Otherwise, as has already happened, we shall find ourselves priced out of our export markets.

These considerations bring us to the Chancellor's second sore point—the balance of payments and its companion, the level of British exports. During 1953 sterling grew stronger and there was a steady, if moderate, improvement in the gold and dollar reserves. But the United Kingdom balance of payments surplus with the rest of the

world fell by £30 millions. In fastening upon this fact, Opposition critics of the year's results have disregarded a mitigating factor of great importance. The surplus with the sterling area taken by itself was down by nearly £200 million, but this was largely because many of those countries are, in the main, exporters of primary products and raw materials. These goods were making less money owing to the fall in world prices, and the countries concerned could not, therefore, afford to import as much. The result may cause disquiet, but does not attract blame. On the other hand, our balance with the dollar countries improved (by £168 million). But for this creditable achievement, the fall in the overall surplus would have been far greater. This set of facts emphasizes both how vulnerable we are to the results of an American depression and the importance of expanding trade with the rest of the sterling area, especially exports. In this connection the Budget provisions for the extension of export credits are to be welcomed, though I believe that the future effect of wage levels on costs will be the more important factor—that and the hoped-for rise in productivity to which new investment allowances are specifically directed.

If the figures of investment estimated in the survey are anywhere near right, there was a marked failure last year by the private sector of industry—that is all but the nationalized industries—to carry out new investment in productive plant and machinery on the scale anticipated, to which last year's restoration of the initial allowances pointed the way. No wonder this has worried the Chancellor. It should worry all who value and believe in the free economy based on individual capitalist enterprise.

For, on the face of it, it is just these

private firms which have failed where the need was great. The *Survey* sets out the facts but does not ask or answer the question "Why?" It is a puzzle. Finance has not been difficult to get; savings have increased, particularly private savings. Perhaps the psychological effect of high company taxation has been a deterrent ("Why spend half one's cash resources on plant to make more profits, most of which goes in tax anyway?") Perhaps there has not really been time yet for investment to get under way again, since Mr. Gaitskell checked it by withdrawing initial allowances. The size of the housing programme may well have delayed new building by drawing off resources. All these factors may have

played their part. At all events it will be a serious matter for the country, and a hard blow to those who have confidence in the ability of private capitalism to serve its needs, if a marked response to the stimulus of the new investment allowances does not appear next year.

This has been called a dull Budget, which the Chancellor has said he does not mind. The dullness is anyhow only superficial. What is important is that it is an honest Budget, even with its shortcomings, and one which should renew confidence in the courage, the foresight and the tenacity of principle of its author.

JAMES RAMSDEN.

SCELBA AND THE SICILIAN SCANDAL

By GAVIN MAXWELL

FOR the past four months the Italian Prime Minister, Signor Scelba, has precariously survived a siege of accusation and mistrust that made his March vote of confidence, by however slender a margin, as astonishing as the eleventh hour relief of Stalingrad. His attackers have followed two main lines in their campaign, of which only one has been sufficiently clearly reported in the English press to make its background intelligible. This is the alleged revelation of extensive drug traffic in Cabinet circles, and the linking of a Cabinet

Minister's near relative with the death of a girl engaged in the same activities. This is contemporary, and the newspaper reports are comparatively easy to follow. To understand the second and possibly more dangerous line of attack, arising from the death in Palermo gaol by strychnine poisoning of a certain Gaspare Pisciotto, the day after Signor Scelba became Prime Minister in January, requires a knowledge of recent history that is not readily available to British readers; for its venom is the pus from a wound now nearly four years old—the mys-

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terious end of Sicily's rebel hero, the "bandit" Salvatore Giuliano.

The phenomenon of Giuliano was that one young peasant, only twenty-five years old at the height of his power, should have risen from the litter and rubble of the Mediterranean war's ending to dominate an island of more than four million people—an island, moreover, where bandits had always been two a penny, and where Dick Turpin would have passed unnoticed among a thousand like him. This was not a rule of terror alone, for throughout Sicily, and especially Western Sicily, the fear that he inspired was mixed in many people with an admiration tantamount to worship. However much the Italian press, in the Government's campaign to belittle him and erase his political significance and the romantic halo of a rebel general, might insist that he was nothing but a common criminal, he remained to Sicilian peasants what he called himself, their appointed leader. He came to represent the power of the slave to rise above the master, and to symbolize in the minds of everybody all the bright hopes, illusions and ambitions that tarnish so early and yet can never be looked at again without some sadness. When an army of a thousand picked men was sent to fight against him, the Giuliano legend was secure for ever.

In his first four years of outlawry the peasant boy had become headline news throughout Italy, and news worth recording in nearly every country in the world. The war, a history of mass action in which the exploits of even the most spectacular of individuals became quickly obscured, had left men hungry for single figures with whom they could identify themselves. Victory and defeat had seemed barely separable in result, and the power-wish was left unassuaged on either side. Secretly

many still longed for violence, provided that it was vicarious and that it was committed by someone whom they could admire idealistically. War is iconoclastic, too, and there were many pedestals vacant, especially those that supported symbols of youth and resurgence.

Giuliano had all the obvious qualifications. He was young, violent, idealistic, and crudely beautiful. He inhabited the mountains and descended upon the rich cities of the plain, robbing the wealthy and giving to the poor. He was a killer, but a just killer—a thing that any worshipper of the God of Abraham and of Isaac must find it a little difficult to resist. He was tremendously powerful, ruling as a despot over Western Sicily; and, finally, elusive as any dream of Orczy, he could neither be killed nor captured. That was the image as it reached the public of many nations, and it was hardly surprising that he commanded the sympathy of identification as directly as any film star. Some of these qualities he really possessed, and with a natural flair for the spectacular he was quick to exploit them.

He had never been removed from his pedestal, for those who attempted to remove him were worshippers of images less fundamental and universal.

He died violently in his twenty-eighth year, a centre of mystery, intrigue and betrayal which served only to formulate anew the myth of a lost leader.

Giuliano belonged absolutely to Sicily; he was more unmistakably a product of her soil than anything that grows from it. In Northern Europe he could never have existed; in America he would quickly have become a true member of the criminal underworld, flourishing rankly as a successful racketeer or hunted as a rat to a reeking death in the sewers. How Sicily nursed him,



SALVATORE GIULIANO.

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fostered his growing megalomania, worshipped him, and, finally, *con molto dolore*, killed him, is understandable only with some knowledge of the attitude of mind and structure of society produced by eighteen occupying nations, eighteen successive incomprehensible and extortionate masters, in twenty centuries of history.

Each conquest, occupation and misrule had contributed something to a specifically Sicilian viewpoint, from which the occupying power and its government seemed always alien and fundamentally hostile. In Sicily it was as though a perpetual Resistance Movement, whose underlying spirit was centuries old, reached an organized maturity under the disastrous Bourbon rule of the nineteenth century. This maturity, while technically criminal in function, represented and still represents the true brain and actions of Sicily—

the *mafia*. So far it has been beyond the power of any of Sicily's temporary masters to stamp out; the *mafia* remains the ultimate Sicilian government.

No one has been able completely to define what the *mafia* is, and even the origin of the word is obscure. To say that it represents on a grand scale the "protection-racket"—as exported by the Sicilians to the United States, and notably Chicago—would not be far from the truth if the structure of Sicilian society resembled in any way that of America, which it does not. To ignore that qualification is to ignore both the valuable aspects of the organization and also its permeation through every layer of society; for the *mafia* is by no means confined to what Western Europeans would call the criminal classes. Nearly all the activities of the *mafia* are duplicated by more constitutional forms of government. The "protection" aspect, which is the most noticeable, is a much more efficient organization than most police forces, for whose maintenance money is also demanded with menaces by the Inland Revenue of the country concerned. A state police force, after all, guarantees neither immunity against burglary and theft nor recovery of stolen goods if the citizen's subscription is brought up to date, while the *mafia* does both. In return, it exacts "protection money" from landowners and householders who are, in its opinion, able to pay. Those who can pay and do not, either in cash or in kind, may be in for an exceedingly unpleasant time—but that is also true in other countries of those who refuse to pay income tax.

In this way, with varying degrees of criminality and violence from district to district according to the character of the local *cosca*, or cell, the *mafia* rules Sicily by a fierce internal law whose

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penalties include capital punishment, while those of Italy do not.

The association of the *mafia* with the strictly criminal underworld is intimate and intricate. While robbery and violence are nominally no direct part of *mafia* activity, both may be "permitted" to be perpetrated upon those who do not subscribe, or who offend in some other way. The whole organization is held together by a muffling blanket of silence and loyalty, so that under this form of internal government it is not surprising that the police of the occupying power have been almost invariably unsuccessful. No police can succeed against the *mafiosi* (men of the mafia); they can succeed only in collaboration with them. The existence of this uncomfortable working arrangement became obvious to much of the outside world only after the volcanic eruption of Giuliano. When the excavations started many important people were revealed petrified in intimate and embarrassing attitudes, like the people of Pompeii when, centuries later, the shroud of lava and time was lifted from them.

Giuliano was conceived in New York and born in Sicily. His parents had achieved the ambition of every Sicilian peasant, and had emigrated to America. For a while the father had worked as a brick carter in Brooklyn, but it had not been a success, and in the summer of 1922 they sailed again for Sicily on a cargo boat. They already had a son and two daughters; Maria came home carrying dynamite in her womb, the embryo of Salvatore Giuliano.

He was born in their home village of Montelepre, in the mountains some seventeen miles from Palermo, on November 16th, 1922. It was the after-war period, a time of chaos in Sicily as great as that which Giuliano himself came to symbolize after the second world war twenty-five years later, for



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MARIA LOMBARDO, MOTHER OF GIULIANO AND AUNT OF GASPARE PISCIOTTA.

Mussolini had not yet started his long-term but futile policy of taming and indoctrinating the island.

Turridu, as he was called (the Sicilian short for Salvatore), was an unusually serious boy for a Sicilian, and showed no criminal or hooligan tendencies. He left school early, because he was needed at home, and, literate but not much more, spent so much of his time reading that he was nicknamed "the doctor." He was fond of watches and mechanical things, and, as he grew into his teens, of shooting rabbits and small birds in the dusty limestone mountains that huddle round Montelepre. He was what the child-worshipping Sicilians call a *bravo ragazzo*, and a *bello ragazzo* too, for there is no doubt that at all ages he was striking to look at. His life followed the normal

course of his environment, and nothing very remarkable happened to him until the Allied occupation of Sicily in 1943.

The Allies, landing in Sicily on July 10th, took advantage of a widespread (though often sycophantic) feeling throughout Sicily for separatism—that is, for separation from their “new” masters, for Sicily had been an Italian possession for no more than seventy-nine years. To encourage the Sicilians to collaborate against Italy, the American Special Services fostered a movement known as EVIS, initials of “Army of Sicilian Independence.”

This did not yet concern Giuliano. His family were concerned only with the problems of existence under AMGOT (Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories), which, as Sicily's nineteenth conqueror, was finding the ordinary administrative difficulties to be enormously magnified by the Sicilians' long traditional experience in the role of the conquered. Grain, among many other things, was being hoarded on an enormous scale, and to force its release AMGOT made the transport of raw foodstuffs between one province and another illegal. Enforcing these laws were the *Carabinieri*, Italy's semi-militarized police, from whom the most undesirable political elements had allegedly been weeded out in a staggeringly short space of time. Black market (any contravention of these laws of the new occupying power) was for most people the only way of living. It ranged, as elsewhere, from the merely technical offences to the grand scale of racketeering. The Giuliano family had a small flour mill and no available grain. Turridu, with one mule, brought in a sack or two at a time from the neighbouring province of Trapani. It was easy if you had money; whole lorry convoys of corn could be driven through on a sub-

stantial bribe to the *carabinieri*, but the Giuliano family could not afford this. Turridu's two sacks were confiscated, no doubt to be re-sold, and he was told that next time he would be arrested. He was, but in the middle of the proceedings two of his captors went to collect their dues from a lorry that was crossing the bridge, leaving only one in charge of him. Giuliano ran for it. He was shot in the back as he ran, the bullet passing through his right side just below the ribs. He fell, but from a kneeling position he drew a pistol and shot his attacker through the head. His identity card lay on the ground beside the dead *carabiniere*.

He became an outlaw. There were thousands of them skulking in the hills, deserters from several armies, political criminals in the eyes of one party or another, robbers and murderers—but they were shadowy figures whose identity cards had not been left in the hands of authority. Giuliano, sore with injustice and his wound, sought out the leaders of EVIS. Some quality in him, some personal stature, demanded that he should be taken seriously, and soon he was enrolled as generalissimo of the Army of Sicilian Independence. With a growing army at his back, drawn partly from those already outlawed and partly from his relatives and many friends in Montelepre, he fought pitched battles for EVIS, while the political complexion changed as Italy declared war on Germany and the separatists became an outlawed party and army. Its political leaders were banished to mild exile, from which, however, they were soon released, for an amnesty was granted to all members of the separatist movement who were not charged with specifically criminal actions. These beneficiaries then discovered that their views had after all been less extreme than had been apparent, and some found political office in

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the new régime. There is evidence that Giuliano tried hard to be included in this amnesty, both by pleading and by threats.

When both were ignored, he fought on from the hills with the savagery of a wounded beast. To raise the enormous funds required to buy his protection by the *mafia*, and to pay his own men both active and "sleeping," he resorted early to the kidnapping of wealthy Palermians for ransoms which, though they have undoubtedly been exaggerated, were by any standards fabulous. Whether to enlist public sympathy or from a genuine quixotry, a proportion of these sums was distributed among the poor, and to the families of his men who fell into enemy hands. The French papers called him *Le Bandit Donneur*, the Americans "The Twentieth Century Robin Hood." In the execution of spies who attempted petty work for his enemies he was utterly ruthless.

But the political flavour was always on the palate. While his tremendous and spectacular war against the *carabinieri* was at least partly personal, his hatred of Communism was as great. Every Communist Party headquarters that he could reach he blew up; the walls of every town in Western Sicily were plastered with his anti-Communist and separatist slogans; he wrote frequent flowery and bombastic letters to the press; he sent well-reasoned if ill-spelt letters to President Truman.

His "bandit" activities gave the Italian government the label they required to reduce him, for Sicilian bandits had long been a by-word, and as such he could be represented as a common criminal without significance—a racketeer who had become an outlaw through black market activities.

When, years later, many of his men were tried and sentenced at Viterbo in Northern Italy, they were tried only for their participation in the events of May 1st, 1947. Giuliano had arrived at a

Communist May Day celebration at the village of Portella di Ginestra, intending, according to him, to try summarily and execute the Communist Senator Li Causi. Because unexpectedly he had not enough men with him, he gave, he said, orders to fire over the heads of the crowd and then to retreat. But a number of machine-gun bullets did strike the crowd, of whom some, including children, died. "It was an accident," he wrote; "have I a stone in my breast in place of a heart?"

Despite this incident his power and popularity grew. Montelepre was sealed off from the outer world by government troops; hundreds of Monteleprans were sent to gaol or to exile; armoured cars and aeroplanes were sent against Giuliano, but the situation did not change. In the summer of 1949 a special force was sent from Italy to destroy him, a hand-picked body of a thousand *carabinieri* under the leadership of a certain Colonel Luca and his second-in-command Captain Perenze. This force was called C.F.R.B.—initials standing for Force for the Suppression of Banditry. Even the name was designed to obscure his political significance.

Beneath the surface, Luca used unorthodox methods, knowing that he could succeed only with *mafia* assistance and with help inside Giuliano's band. Giuliano did what Luca hoped for; he killed a *mafia* chief in Partinico, and at least one section of the *mafia*, the "old *mafia*," turned against him. One by one a great number of his men were betrayed and arrested, until by the early summer of 1950 only a small number of his inner circle remained at liberty. Of these the best known was his first cousin and co-chieftain, Gaspare Pisciotta, whom he trusted absolutely, and with whom he had exchanged blood from his wrist in a primitive pact of fidelity.



GASPARE PISCIOTTA.

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In early June, Turridu lay in hiding in the house of a "young *mafioso*" lawyer in Castelvetro, on the southern side of Sicily. There he was brought a letter warning him that Gaspare was a traitor, but he cried out: "All my friends have turned against me, but I will never believe it of Gaspare, never!" It seems that he did not.

On July 5th, all Italy was ablaze with the news that Giuliano had been killed in battle by the C.F.R.B., shot down in a gun-fight by Captain Perenze himself in the small hours of the morning. Perenze gave a press conference, describing the battle in great detail, the number of rounds fired, and the desperate bullet-riddled Giuliano firing on until the end of life itself. Luca and Perenze became, for the Italian Government, national heroes.

Something, however, went wrong. A little later, Gaspare Pisciotta was arrested, not by the C.F.R.B., but by a different branch of the police, who had long maintained an unhealthy rivalry with the *carabinieri*. He was taken to Viterbo, where his past comrades were standing trial for their participation in the massacre of Portella di Ginestra.

There in the court Pisciotta announced that, by personal arrangement with Signor Scelba, then Minister of the Interior in the Italian Government, he had assassinated Giuliano in his sleep. It had become necessary, Pisciotta said, to do this, *con molto dolore*, because of different idealisms and Turridu's obstinacy. He then produced a letter, apparently signed by Scelba, promising him a free pardon in return for the killing. He had had personal interviews with Colonel Luca, who had obtained this document for him. There had always been a close working arrangement, he said, between Giuliano and the true police, who had aided him in his war against the *carabinieri* and even supplied him with arms. Many famous people in high places were stated to have been working secretly with Giuliano. "Pisciotta goes mad," flared the headlines, "and accuses heaven and earth." It was a *succès de scandale*—Italy buzzed. Luca was called, and confirmed that he had met Pisciotta secretly, had supplied him with passes and documents, and had given him the letter from Scelba. But the signature, Luca claimed, was a forgery.

At the end of one of the longest trials in Italian history, which revealed co-operation in many strange quarters, including that of the "old *mafia*" first with Giuliano and then with the C.F.R.B. against him, and direct contact between Giuliano and the police proper, Pisciotta was sentenced to life

imprisonment, beginning on May 4th, 1952.

He had served little more than a year and a half of this sentence when on January 8th, 1954, Signor Scelba became Prime Minister of Italy. With admirable promptitude for Scelba's enemies, Pisciotta died in prison of strychnine poisoning, found to have been contained in a medicine that he took for tuberculosis. All the prison staff was changed, but a little later another material witness died in the same way. Several others in prison were taken violently ill, but recovered.

That is a necessarily extremely con-

densed précis of the events that have led to a demand, spreading far outside Communist circles, for the arrest and trial of Captain Perenze on a charge of perjury. Scelba, having secured a giddily precarious vote of confidence, has stated that he cannot discuss the subject in the Chamber of Deputies, but has promised to hold an enquiry into all forms of graft in Italian politics and administration. The result, if it is ever made public, should be fascinating reading. In the meantime, since the scapegoat has been killed, it is likely to be replaced.

GAVIN MAXWELL.

MORE IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN*

By MICHAEL FABER

AN American business-man was talking about the change that had come over Japan. "Four years ago," he said, "the Japanese business-man was working as hard as he could to put himself and his country back on its feet again. To-day I go into his office and, likely as not, he's practising putts across the carpet. And the hell of it is, he's on the verge of bankruptcy."

The picture is too nearly true to be healthy. After her defeat in 1945 Japan needed to undertake a thorough reconstruction of her industries. The economic stimulation supplied by the Korean War could have provided the ideal opportunity for financing this. But it did not do so. Very little effort was taken to impose austerity upon the nation. Since the beginning of 1952 foreign-made goods have been available to the Japanese in their own markets,

and the consumption of these goods, from Bourbon to Buicks, from coffee to Coty, has steadily increased. The consumption level of the economy is said to be 96 per cent. of the 1934-36 level, but the inequality of incomes is such that the poorer inhabitants have only achieved about 75 per cent. of their pre-war standard. Many of these are too poor to be able to afford rice; they sell their own produce and substitute for it cheaper grains like barley. But there have been sufficient people with money to raise the price level of consumption goods by 50 per cent. in the last five years. Tokyo is now considered the most expensive city in the world to live in, Western style.

Money spent for investment has been equally uncontrolled. The sleek

*Mr. Faber's first article, *Japan Today: A Traveller's Impressions*, appeared in our April number. Editor.

cars and the well-dressed women of the business sectors in Tokyo, Kobe and Osaka, are matched by a series of beautiful new office buildings and cinemas. But the productive units of Japanese industry, the workshops and the factories, are frequently having to work with tools that are over ten years old. It has been estimated that only 11 per cent. of national expenditure has been used for industrial investment, as against 25 per cent. in post-war Germany. There is a desperate need for renovation and cost-rationalization.

These out-dated industrial techniques and the surplus of money on the home market have seen the Japanese producer pricing himself out of the international market. His products are not of a high quality, they are comparatively costly to produce, and there is an ample demand for them at home. On top of all this, there is some justification, despite recent trade agreements, in his complaint that where he can sell cheaply abroad he is likely to be obstructed by high tariffs and import quotas. This economic holiday has been made possible by the American dollars spent in this country. Without American spending, Japan in 1953 would have had an adverse balance of trade of one billion dollars. As it was the deficit was 250 million. Even with aid under the Mutual Security Agreement, the quantity of off-shore procurements is certain to drop.

There are signs that responsible politicians are now preparing to meet these economic problems. Credit has been tightened, and a new young Minister of Finance has announced his intention of committing the Government to a programme of austerity. In the past one has heard much praise of the grim recoveries of Britain and Germany, but it has always been accompanied by reasons as to why this could not be accomplished in Japan.

At last it may be. When it is, we shall be confronted by the basic and more permanent features of the Japanese economy. The most important of these is the fact that Japan cannot produce enough to feed her population. Therefore she must export to live. But Japan is also almost totally devoid of the raw materials most necessary to support an industrial community. She must import her coal, iron ore and timber, as well as her food. Her geological situation therefore compels her to make her living by selling manufactured or semi-manufactured goods of a type that are most likely to be discriminated against when another country wants to protect its own home industries.

This is one of the many ways in which the Japanese situation is analogous to the British. It is a situation in which the need for colonies is felt very badly. Failing these, a country is certain to make its friends amongst those who are able to supply it with raw materials and willing to provide it with markets. It is as well to remember this. Last October Japan signed a £60 million barter trade pact with Communist China. In this respect it might also be worth-while looking back to the Imperial Rescript in which war was declared upon the United States and Britain. It gave expression to attitudes that have long been a part of Japanese history, and were not obliterated in 1945.

These two Powers [it said] have obstructed by every means our peaceful commerce, and finally resorted to a direct severance of economic relations, menacing gravely the existence of Our Empire.

Patiently have We waited and long have We endured in the hope that Our Government might retrieve the situation in peace, but Our Adversaries, showing not the least spirit of conciliation, have

MORE IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN

unduly delayed a settlement, and in the meantime they have intensified the economic and political pressure to compel thereby Our Empire to submission.

The situation being such as it is, Our Empire for its existence and self-defence has no other resource but to appeal to arms and to crush every obstacle in its path.

When General MacArthur claimed that in three years he had established a popular democracy in Japan, it was generally accounted to be one of the most remarkable statements of a most remarkable man. To-day democracy is far from safe. The parliamentary situation is not as unstable as that in France, nor as inflammable as that in Italy. But if the Government is stronger, still the institution of democracy itself is less secure. The three main parties, the Liberals, the Progressives, and the Socialists, are coalitions of splinter-groups. They are none of them, in fact, particularly liberal, progressive, or socialistic. There are a number of violently nationalistic groups on the Right, some consisting of scarcely more than a single person. There is only one party which seems to be closely organized and to operate with unity of purpose—the Communist.

The trade unions, which were government-controlled before the war, are still weak, but they are showing a new self-consciousness. Before the war they had been little more than instruments for diffusing government policy. Government policy came down in the form of the Emperor's will, and the Emperor's will was defined, in the familiar totalitarian pattern, as the good and glory of the people. To resist this will was to commit the worst of all Japanese crimes, disloyalty. To-day the unions are, quite properly, more concerned with the welfare of their own members. But from what

one is able to learn it seems that the majority of the leaders have convinced themselves that no real improvement is possible before a complete political change is effected. They are therefore more concerned with political activity than with negotiation on wages. The new political form desired has been lifted straight from Marx's vision of socialism. The leaders concerned are naïve enough to lean to the view that Russia's help could be instrumental in achieving this.

Because the farm workers are not yet in the fold of the trade unions, and because the worker is so conscious of national history, so amenable to discipline, and so inarticulate, it is not easy to estimate the strength of the internal Communist threat. Most observers consider it to be less than the danger of a resurgent militarist regime. For the basic weakness of democracy in Japan is not to be found in the disorganization of the Diet; it is to be found in the lack of political consciousness of the people. When the first election was held in 1948 there was no way in which the common peasant or worker could have understood either the purpose or the potency of his vote. His history had accustomed him to a benevolent, but tyrannical, paternalism. Faced with an apparent power of decision, he was fitted only to doing what he was told.

If democracy is to prove resilient its strength must come from below. It is not a question solely of education, for Japan's standard of education has been for half a century among the highest in the world. Faced with the tortuous ideograms, Japanese children still exhibit a lower illiteracy rate than those of any other country. It is a question of a new political awareness.

I was talking one evening with a young student from Meiji University. "Do you and your contemporaries

still believe," I asked him, "in the story of how Japan was created by Izanagi and Izanami standing on the Floating Bridge of Heaven, and how she has been ruled by an unbroken line of Emperors descended from the Sun Goddess?" He smiled deprecatingly. "Well, sometimes we do and sometimes we don't," he said. "Like some of the stories in your Old Testament, they seem to us to be true in spirit." I listened with interest, because the idea that it is the destiny of these island people to give the whole world the benefit of their enlightened rule is part of the same myth.

The old gods are not yet dead. The Emperor is still regarded in general with a fanatical respect, which borders upon reverence. Some of the eight million gods of the Shinto pantheism are gaining obeisance from a new generation who are once again being taught to bow towards the Isle of Ise. This is important, because the resurrection of the gods means the death of the new constitution. At least one aspect of the constitution is doomed anyway. One clause reads:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and understanding, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation, and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained.

Vice-President Nixon, in a recent trip to Japan, admitted this clause to be a mistake. In fact the army has already been resurrected under the name of the "national security corps," and the navy under the disguise of a coast guard.

Ironically enough, it is the Americans who are now insisting that this clause

be discarded, or at least disregarded. The Japanese people themselves are overwhelmingly against rearmament, because while there is very little apprehension over the possibility of aggression by Russia or Red China, there is a great deal of worry over the country's living standard. And it is felt that the more rearmament is undertaken, the more the country will have to remain dependent upon America. Realizing that America needs them as an ally in the Pacific, the less responsible Japanese are now calling for economic independence, while they are still unable to support themselves, and an end of the occupation, while they are still without an adequate defence.

The subtlest, and perhaps the most justifiable form of anti-Americanism takes shape in an objection to three things. First, the impression that the Americans (and British) are apt to give that Asians belong to an inferior form of the human species. This is particularly manifested in the American immigration laws. Second, the high tariffs that Japan has to face whenever, —as with cheap china or textiles—her merchants seem to have a chance of capturing a good share of the American market. And third, to the American use of aid "donations" as a lever to force political alignment. There are some who regard this as the new form of imperialism. The recent outcry against the hydrogen bomb explosion, touched off by the radiation burns suffered by twenty-three Japanese fishermen, really gives voice to the much deeper fear that America will draw Japan into another war.

There is also an inclination to feel that the American outlook on life is under-civilized. The American accent has always been on individual initiative; the Japanese have been taught the virtue of anonymous decisions arrived at collectively. The American address

MORE IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN

is forthright and direct; the Japanese will be tactful to the point of dissimulation. The American is expected to force his own way along in life and in business; the Japanese, when he joins a firm, expects to stay with it all his life, and the firm itself will always take care of him. The accent at his work and in his home life is on mutual dependence. America is a young country, proud of its youth and its racial diversity. Japan is an old country, proud of its age and of its ethnic unity. America is rich and self-sufficient, Japan is poor in natural resources and dependent on trade.

For all these reasons, there has often been expressed to me the feeling that Japan is more like another island nation—proud in ancient tradition, situated on the fringes of a great continent, linking that continent to the New World, dependent, too, on being able to sell the products of its industry.

What, then, are Japan's prospects for the future?

Her internal political position is not strong. Mr. Yoshida, the Prime Minister, seems likely to carry the Diet with him in rearmament, but he does not possess either the personal or the parliamentary fortitude of Herr Adenauer. His Government has recently been shaken by scandals, and continues to exist only on the sufferance of a Coalition. More seriously, democracy itself is not yet firmly rooted amongst the country's older institutions.

Externally, Japan is not yet on friendly terms with any of her neighbours. Syngman Rhee, in Korea, ceaselessly warns the West of the duplicity of Japan's protestations, and has said he would rather see his country over-run by Communists than controlled by the Japanese. Memories of the occupation are such that any Japanese appearing in the outer islands of the Philippines would be promptly

murdered. There are indeed a small number of Japanese still hiding in the interior of some of the islands, unable to get out. The Japanese are extremely pleasant people to live among, but in every country they occupied in their attempt to spread "beauty and order" over the world, they were passionately hated, and they still are. Even official relations are likely to prove strained until Japan has made some substantial effort to meet the vast reparations that are claimed against her by Indo-China, Thailand, Malaya, Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Economically it seems certain that Japan will pass through stringent times in the next two years, perhaps times of crisis. With foreign expenditures declining, her own industry out-of-date, many of her pre-war markets closed and, if opened, perhaps irredeemable, with an inflated home economy and over-extended credit, an inadequate power supply, and a restless labour market, no other prediction is possible.

Yet there can be no doubt of the resurgence of Japan. Since our allies of the last war have turned into our potential enemies in the next, it has become essential to guarantee that our late enemies should be our future allies. Neither Britain nor America can afford to let Japan flounder. But even without external aid, Japan would have revived. Since Admiral Perry opened Japan to the world a hundred years ago, she has consistently studied to assimilate the power techniques of the West into her own civilization in order that she might assert herself among the nations. Complete as was the surrender in 1945, one gets the impression that the Japanese regarded it only as a setback. I go to work each morning with a Japanese friend who spends eight hours a day in the office, another three to four hours at university courses, and has to ride

for an hour on the trams in between. "Japan will be all right," he says, "because, whatever the difficulties, it is ultimately the people who count."

It is not the fact, but the form, of their revival that is dangerously uncertain.

MICHAEL FABER.

AMERICA'S NEW DEFENCE LOOK

By DENYS SMITH

EVERY so often the United States indulges in what is termed a "Great Debate." To qualify for the title intense public interest is not enough. There must be elements of foreign and defence policy mixed with constitutional theory and the whole overlaid with a good partisan dose of politics. Nearly every "Great Debate," too, derives some of its intensity from a nostalgic isolationism which lies behind the position taken by some of its participants. The current "Great Debate" is over the so-called "new look" defence policy and the diplomatic concepts which accompany it—not the McCarthy controversy, the hydrogen bomb, or the possibility of a recession, all of which attract as much, if not more, public attention.

The phrase "Great Debate" was first used, within the writer's personal experience, by the participants in the controversy over amending the Neutrality Act, in the early days of the war, to permit "cash and carry" arms purchases. There have been many "Great Debates" since—over Lend-Lease, the United Nations Charter and the North Atlantic Treaty. A prolonged "Great Debate," which erupted on many fronts in 1950, is worth considering in some detail because of its bearing on the current debate over the new defence

look. Both President Eisenhower and the Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles, were participants. Their statements and speeches at a time before they assumed, or even thought they would assume, their present offices throw considerable light on their position to-day. Like the current debate it concerned the rights and powers of the President and the strategic question of how security could be best achieved. It also showed, as has the current controversy, that the sharpest differences vanish if a little common sense is assumed on the part of those in authority.

The debate started when President Truman announced that he had approved "substantial increases in the strength of United States forces stationed in Western Europe." This touched many Congressmen on the raw. The President was, on his own responsibility, moving American troops within striking distance of the largest army in the world. He was increasing the risk of involving the United States in war, perhaps even provoking attack, though the Constitution gave Congress alone the right to declare war. He had already sent American troops to Korea on his own responsibility. Now the remaining troops might be sent to other far corners of the earth. There seemed, to the President's critics, a sinister pattern in all this. The Korean

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war was illegal, the Eisenhower mission as Supreme Commander of N.A.T.O. forces to Europe unconstitutional. It was during this Great Debate that proposals for a "Fortress America" were made, with emphasis on air strength and, in its extreme form, abandonment of America's allies, who, so it was maintained, had shown both by their failure to look to their own defences and by their failure to respond to the call to resist aggression in Korea that they were unreliable. Was the United Nations worth-while and was not collective security a myth?

In Truman's defence it was argued that since he was Commander-in-Chief under the Constitution he could deploy troops as he saw fit, as had many other Presidents. To which it was answered that there was a difference in kind, not only of degree, between President Truman's action and, say, that of President Jefferson in sending a large part of the American fleet to the Mediterranean to check the Barbary pirates. For one thing the troops sent to Korea and Europe were drafted by act of Congress. They were not enlisted professionals. Congress therefore had a special responsibility.

In February 1951, General Eisenhower, as he then was, took note of the defeatist spirit which had arisen and of the disappointment felt at the operation of the collective security idea. He urged that the unity of the Communist world be met "with a higher type of unity of free men that will not be defeated." Enemy propaganda was saying the job was hopeless. "Let us not buy too freely enemy propaganda." Neither General Eisenhower nor Mr. Dulles believed in abandoning America's allies or in the "Fortress America" concept. In December 1950, Dulles said: "A United States which could be an inactive spectator while the barbarians

over-ran and desecrated the cradle of our Christian civilization would not be the kind of United States that could defend itself." He agreed with the "Fortress America" advocates that you could not build up "static defence forces" along the whole perimeter of the Iron Curtain and make each nation there impregnable. But this did not mean you had to abandon the collective security idea. Fortunately the choice was not between abandoning collective security or attempting the impossible. "It is not necessary either to spread our strength all around the world in futile attempts to create everywhere a static defence, nor need we crawl back into our hole in the vain attempt of defending ourselves against all the rest of the world." Collective security was not restricted to using ground forces at places of the aggressor's choosing. "Collective security depends on the capacity to counter-attack against the aggressor. . . . The arsenal of retaliation should include all forms of counter-attack, with maximum flexibility and mobility and the possibility of surprise. The places of assembly should be chosen not as places to defend but as places suitable for launching the means of destroying the forces of aggression."

Over three years later, on January 12 this year, Dulles, who had in the meantime become Secretary of State, went to New York and made the same speech over again. Even some of the phrases were the same. But what happened? A great many people decided that there had been an abrupt and spectacular change in American policy; that allies and collective security were to be abandoned for a return to some version of "Fortress America"; that local defence was to be ignored and reliance placed on atomic retaliation; that Europe was in effect being told: "We will not help defend you

but will liberate you after you have been occupied, even if we have to destroy your entire industrial structure in the process." But no one who had been following the course of events in the United States ought to have been surprised by the Dulles speech, or, knowing Dulles's past career and background, to have misunderstood its meaning.

Perhaps, as Mr. Dulles himself suggested, people had been confused by the "new look" label. There had, during the past few years, been a change in military thinking which originated not in the United States but in Europe. The President's Budget message early this year spoke of "a new concept for planning and financing our national security programme." The idea was no longer to take "assumed fixed dates of maximum danger" and get "maximum readiness" by each date, but to strive for "a strong military position which can be maintained over the extended period of uneasy peace." This shift in emphasis from a frenzied effort to get full military strength by a fixed date to the "long haul" which could be maintained without weakening economically the nations it was designed to strengthen, had been discussed and agreed upon at a N.A.T.O. Council meeting last April.

Despite this, however, an influential and well-informed American writer said in March; "The two-month excursion through the enchanted lagoons of the 'new look' began January 12 when Dulles himself coined the phrase 'instant retaliation' but did not at the time accompany it by a detailed explanation which would have avoided the many misunderstandings which ensued. The military staffs of every member of N.A.T.O. requested urgent clarification of 'instant retaliation'." As can be seen from the above, the "new look" is

not so new and Dulles did not coin the phrase "instant retaliation" on January 12. Moreover, if the N.A.T.O. military staffs, which had discussed it at length the previous April, and again in December, were still puzzled, it says little for their acumen. Adlai Stevenson in his Miami speech the same month (mainly devoted to attacking Eisenhower for tolerating McCarthyism) complained that the Republican Administration was impulsively acting "as if air atomic power were a completely satisfactory substitute for reduced military and naval power." This was a gross distortion of the Administration's military planning, while if deliberation for a year or so is impulsive one can only hope the Republican Administration will refrain from acting with due deliberation.

Every single foreign fear could have been stifled at birth by studying Dulles's speech as a whole and taking into account the known background of Dulles and the President. The Eisenhower Administration is irrevocably committed to a system of security based on allies. At the very time fears were raised that the "new look" meant a return to the "Fortress America" idea, and abandoning local defence for quick atomic retaliation by air, the flow of weapons from America to increase local defences was reaching new records. Americans were standing guard on every continent and in forty-nine countries, from the six divisions in Europe to small military missions in Persia and Indo-China.

The essential features of the new defence look—reliance on local forces for perimeter defence, backed by the deterrent capacity of the strategic air force—were explained by Eisenhower last Christmas. He issued a statement on Korea from Augusta, Georgia, stating that because the South Korean

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army had now been made much stronger and American air power "possesses greater mobility and greater striking force than ever," two American divisions could be withdrawn. The President recalled, in case the Communists drew the wrong deductions from this, that the sixteen nations fighting in Korea had all agreed that the consequences of renewing aggression would be so grave "that in all probability it would not be possible to confine hostilities within the frontiers of Korea." Here was the chief difference between the strategy of the "new look" and the policy it replaced—a readiness to pick the area, as well as the means, of dealing with future aggression. It was not announced by Dulles off his own bat, but was an inter-allied decision.

Even if Dulles's January speech had been the only guide, it should have answered many misconceptions. He had said that, in modifying the nature of defence preparations, "sudden and spectacular change had to be avoided." He had said: "We need allies and collective security . . . local defence will always be important." He had made it plain that the way to deter aggression was not for America alone, but "for the free community to be willing and able to respond vigorously at places and with means of its own choosing." He had argued that it was not the threat of retaliation, but the capacity to retaliate which would deter the enemy. The real mystery is not what Dulles meant, but how he could have been misunderstood.

The familiar constitutional complaints that "instant retaliation" meant the President would ignore Congress were as groundless as the complaints that he would ignore America's allies. The fears both of American constitutionalists and foreign diplomats would disappear if the solvent of

common sense were applied. It should never be necessary to stress the point that Eisenhower, who has twice been an allied commander, is not the kind of man who would ignore allies or forget their value. It should be equally self-evident that no President should sit and twiddle his thumbs till allied capitals had been consulted and Congress had voted, if a warning message came that a fleet of enemy bombers were crossing the Arctic. He should take instant action. There are times when consultation would be wise and prudent and other times when it would be unwise and so imprudent that any President who delayed for consultation should, as Eisenhower himself expressed it, not only be impeached but hanged. In the related argument over Britain's right to be consulted before use is made of American bases on her soil, it is sometimes forgotten that under the North Atlantic Treaty Britain has agreed that an attack on the United States is equivalent to an attack on Britain herself. It is a principle which cuts both ways. Unless America is capable of acting with criminal foolishness there can be no fear that the United States would wish to use British bases for a purpose to which Britain could not agree. Unless Britain is capable of dishonouring her pledged word, there can be no doubt but that the use of British bases would be sanctioned immediately in any major crisis. Consultation is a matter of little practical importance.

The capacity shown by critics of Dulles for "massive retaliation" did not at any rate "deter" the Secretary of State from making another speech in New York on March 29, this time on Far Eastern policy. Without claiming it as an example of cause and effect, Dulles noted that there had, in fact, been warning statements "that aggression might lead to

action at places and by means of the free world's choosing" and that there had, in fact, been no open aggression by the Chinese Communists in Indo-China. Nobody could conclude from this latter speech that the United States wanted "to go it alone." Dulles made a special point of the need for "united action" to prevent the loss of Indo-China, which sent the worriers off on a new track. In the broader field the theory has frequently been advanced that two world wars could have been avoided if only the United

States had warned the Kaiser and Hitler in advance that she would join with the opponents of aggression. Now the United States has announced in advance that her response to aggression will be massive and instant. She will not wait two or three years to make up her mind. We cannot have it both ways. Some of the frills which accompany the American warning may not be liked, but the essence of the change in the American attitude is one which all should welcome.

DENYS SMITH.

EVE OF THE POLL IN AUSTRALIA

By STANLEY MOORE

THE Australian Federal Elections have been fixed for May 29th and quietly, behind the scenes and within their organizations, the Parties have been planning their campaigns. While Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh have been in Australia, making their triumphal Progress, campaigning has not taken place publicly, but from now onwards the campaign will be conducted in full force.

The chief issues are now believed to be settled, and it is not thought that any important fresh issues can arise. The 1949 election was fought largely on great issues of principle, such as Socialism versus free enterprise and the menace of Communism. The issues in this election will be quite different, although the old issues will still have their influence, because they are always with us.

The two principal features in the election will be the Menzies Government's 1953-54 Budget on the one hand, and, on the other, a direct and deliberate invitation to the electors of Australia to think about and compare for themselves the qualities of the two leaders of the opposing sides and of their principal lieutenants.

The August Budget is one for which the Government Parties claim very great credit. It was indeed almost universally praised by the Press of Australia—including journals that support the Labour Party—and by some leading union leaders who are members of the Labour Party. The Budget cut taxation by £118,400,000, which is the greatest reduction made by any Government in any one year in Australian history. The reduction in income tax averaged 12½ per cent. per head of income tax payers. Entertainment tax

EVE OF THE POLL IN AUSTRALIA

was abolished, rates of sales tax severely cut, public and private company taxes reduced. There were benefits for almost every class of person in this Budget. The Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, said: "This is the best possible moment, both psychologically and from an economic standpoint, to give a strong impetus to effort and enterprise."

The Budget is looked upon as the culmination of Mr. Menzie's fight against inflation over the last two years, and its attractive conditions are claimed as proof of the success of his import restrictions and other measures designed to control inflation. That inflation has been, at least, largely controlled, is clearly proved by the now very slight increase shown in the quarterly figures of the cost of living index.

Along with such a successful Budget and a fairly effective control of inflation, Mr. Menzies will claim an almost complete elimination of the shortages of vital goods which existed when he replaced the Chifley regime in December, 1949. At that time we were very short of coal and consequently also of steel. Great shortages existed also in timber, bricks, cement and other materials, such as farm equipment. As a result, black marketing was rife, and industry was held up by lack of necessary materials. Communists dominated the great unions that controlled the production of these materials. The result was that strikes were incessant, and go-slow, unco-operative tactics were commonly practised. Black-outs of power and light were frequent in the cities, and also tram and train strikes.

All these troubles have been overcome by the Menzies Government. Coal production is up by 50 per cent. and we now are exporting coal, whereas in 1949 we were importing it. Steel production is almost doubled, having increased by 80 per cent. Where seven

houses were built in the capital cities in 1949, twelve are now being built. In the country, the figures are nearly double. In other vital materials and goods the picture is similar. Strikes are now unusual, and a condition of general peace is present in industry.

Great credit is due to Mr. Harold Holt, the Minister for Labour, for all this. All the time he has been developing friendly contact with non-Communist union leaders, and co-operation has replaced hostility. But little of this would have been possible if a great many Communist union leaders had not been removed. The getting rid of them was made possible by the Menzies Government's "secret ballot" legislation for the election of union officers. Under this legislation, if a certain proportion of the membership of a union signed a petition in favour of a union election conducted by direction of the Arbitration Court, then their wish would be granted. Using this method, union after union has ejected its Communist leaders from office, replacing them by officers belonging to the Australian Labour Party Industrial Groups, which are pledged to fight Red influence in the unions.

Generally speaking, the Menzies Government has fulfilled the promises it made to electors in 1949. That is, the Reds have been effectively controlled and their hold on the unions largely broken. The attempts to socialize Australia, begun by the Chifley Government, have stopped and the process has been put into reverse.

It is often thrown out as a taunt by the Labour Opposition leaders that the Menzies Government has failed to keep its promise "to put value back into the pound." But, if the pound has slipped back in value a little over the last four years, under the severe inflationary forces which were unforeseen in 1949, the total purchasing power of the wage-

earner's weekly pay envelope has substantially increased, and this latter condition achieves the same object as was desired by the wish "to put value back into the pound." Though the value of each pound is slightly less, there are now more pounds each week, so the individual's prosperity has increased.

Finally, the Government has greatly improved the defensive power of Australia, and has greatly improved relations and friendly co-operation with Britain and with the United States.

The other great issue on which the election will be fought is a comparison of the leaders of the two Parties and of their chief lieutenants. An important factor here will be that Mr. Menzies is more popular with the Australian electors than Dr. Evatt. A Gallup Poll question recently was: "On personal grounds, as apart from politics, whom do you prefer, Mr. Menzies or Dr. Evatt?" The result was that 50 per cent. chose Menzies and 24 per cent. preferred Evatt. Much will be made of the past record and recent utterances of the Labour leaders in regard to Socialism—especially of their attitude to the nationalization of the private banks. Dr. Evatt, since he became Leader of the Party, has attempted to give the impression that the Party is now set on a moderate course and has given up any thought of a general socialization programme, in the near future at any rate. Unfortunately for his purpose, his chief lieutenants are speaking with a very different voice. Mr. Clyde Cameron, last October, stated with great emphasis that Labour, if returned, would nationalize the banks, insurance companies, and several other industries. Mr. Ward made similar statements and, in regard to the banks, Mr. Calwell has let it be known that, before very long, only the Commonwealth (Government) Bank will remain. These statements

have undone much of Dr. Evatt's work to try and woo the moderate voter.

The Government Parties will point to the actual record, when they were the Government, of Dr. Evatt, Mr. Calwell and Mr. Ward. They will contrast the cordial relations Mr. Casey has built between Australia and both America and Britain, with the less warm relations existing under Dr. Evatt. They will point out how differently Mr. Holt, as Minister for Immigration, has handled Asian feelings from the way in which Mr. Calwell antagonized Asians and embittered their feelings. They will recall to Australians how persistently Dr. Evatt battled to centralize power in Canberra with the object of socializing Australia. By contrast, they will indicate Mr. Menzies and his chief Ministers as statesmen of a far more responsible order, who have brought great prosperity to Australia and have made her liked and admired abroad.

The Liberal Party and its ally, the Country Party, are in a state of enthusiastic unity internally and the two Parties are working well together. The same cannot be said of the Labour Party. There the divisions are deep and the issues dividing the factions are fundamental. Between the Industrial Groupers on the one hand and the extreme socialist followers of Mr. Ward on the other, is the unbridgeable gap of their attitude to the Communist Party. Nor is the Party firmly under the control of one leader. Mr. Calwell, the Deputy Leader, seems at times to be almost co-equal in leadership with Dr. Evatt. They sometimes speak with differing voices on the same subject and there are signs that Mr. Ward's group strongly objects to Dr. Evatt's tactics of pushing Socialism into the back-ground.

Recent Gallup Polls, and also the bye-election for the federal seat of Gwydir in New South Wales, show clearly that a lot of electoral support

THE PLUM

has swung to the Government since the Senate poll last May. Gwydir was considered a good test, for it was an electorate which had swung from one party to the other, over the years. The whole resources of both sides were flung into this bye-election. Both leaders and other leading figures on

both sides spoke in the campaign. The result was a heavy defeat for Labour.

Despite all these signs, however, the result is still quite open and the voting may be very close. The Government will require to strain every nerve to achieve its return.

STANLEY MOORE.

THE PLUM

By EDWARD HYAMS

NOT above a mile from my house there is a neglected hedge beside an unimportant road, and part of it is formed by a *prunus*. In places this has been allowed, not, I think, by design, to grow into trees. They are tall and spindly and the wood, or rather bark, a sooty black; very like blackthorn, but the thorns not so long nor so cruel. They are not blackthorn but some other wild plum. These trees are for me the heralds of spring; very good heralds, too, for, unlike the calendar they suit their spring beginning to the season; and, unlike the meteorological office, are rarely deceived into either optimism or pessimism by an untimely spell of weather too warm or too cold for the date. But early though our common wild plum blossom is—I mean blackthorn, and know few more beautiful compositions than the starry, dead-white flowers clustered about the long dead-black thorns, against a cold blue sky—my mysterious wild plum is a good deal earlier in flowering. And on those branches not pulled down and torn off when in flower by people who can only enjoy what they own, the trees set fruit, small, golden plums of excellent flavour and sweetness. But the trees are not the *myrobalans* of plant nursery commerce: in fact I do not know what they are, nor whether

Prunus domestica or *Prunus institia*. But I take the species to be a naturalized foreigner of great antiquity, wild only in the sense of being now uncared for, as I am sure it was once cultivated.

Wild plums of one sort or another are so common with us and all over Northern Europe—our own sloes and the larger bullaces for example—that one really would be excusable for taking the very numerous cultivated varieties for creations of classical or mediæval European pomology. But it is the old story with the plum as with so many other fruits: the Western Asiatic gardeners were anciently by so many centuries ahead of our own that the products of their skill were distributed thousands of miles from their native gardens long before the horticultural skill of Europeans, and especially Western Europeans, was equal to creating improved garden varieties of fruit plants, out of wild ones.

So that our plums, despite the fact that several congeners are native, are, or rather were, foreign introductions. They came to us from France; and, at least as regards the better sorts, they came surprisingly late.

In a pamphlet called *The Husbandman's Fruitful Orchard*, quoted by Elinor Sinclair Rohde, it is recorded that:

"One Richard Harris, of London, Borne in Ireland, Fruiterer to King Henry the eighth, fetched out of Fraunce great store of graftes, especially pippins, before which time there were no pippins in England. He fetched also out of the Lowe Countries, cherrie graftes and Peare graftes of divers sorts: Then tooke a peese of ground belonging to the King in the Parish of Tenham in Kent, being about the quantitie of seven score acres; whereof he made an orchard, planting therein all these foreign graftes. Which orchard is and hath been from time to time the chief mother of all other orchards, for those kind of fruit in Kent and divers other places. . . ."

Plums are not mentioned; had the principal introductions already been made? Many were made still later but the varieties already established were numerous. Chaucer, in his version of the *Romaunt de la Rose*—ecologically speaking not very good evidence, however—was able to write:

And many homely trees there were
That peaches, coyne^s * and apples bere
Medlars, ploumes, peres, chestneyis
Cheryse of which many one fayne is,
Notes, aleys and bolas
That for to seen it was solas.

Quinces.

Perhaps we may conclude that people who still trouble to cultivate bullaces, could not have had very fine plums. But in fact the plums had been brought from France, probably by Roman officials stationed here in the 3rd century; and by Chaucer's time the art of grafting had certainly reached England, so that English gardeners were equipped to propagate the best kinds.

For the prosperity of tree fruit growing in any country depended, and still depends, upon skill in grafting and budding, terms which are both included in the older word *imping*. How ancient is that craft? Did the Asiatic

proto-civilizations possess it? Probably they did; at least it came to us from the descendants of the most ancient Semitic peoples of the Near East.

The whole history of horticulture might be represented as a struggle between those for whom the art of gardening lies in changing natural forms, in "improving" on nature, and those who prefer to do little more than make a clean, well-ordered place in which nature can produce her own effects. Even to-day, when the overpowering radiant influence of the workshop and laboratory tend to make us treat plants as machines, and the famous "conquest of nature" entails the production of ever more elaborate hybrids, provoked polyploidal mutations, and other plant artifacts, there is a strong school of gardeners who are reacting towards the simpler, less sophisticated plants—the "species" roses instead of hybrid teas, the "species" tulips instead of their hybrids, *fraises des bois* instead of the large *Fragraria Chilensis* derivatives. In the case of fruit trees it has rarely been claimed that the wild fruits are superior to the garden kinds: that would be absurd. But even in the case of pomology the "reactionaries" are useful, they check the tendency to depart too far, in grafting and pruning and training, from the "natural" form of the fruit-tree.

During the Roman Empire's golden age there was a perfect mania for pomological monstrosities, created by imping. It included the grafting of several species on a single root, despite Pliny's outcry against this outrage on nature. It was not then understood—excepting no doubt by the practical, but inarticulate, gardener—that while union between congenerous species is usually possible, the union of different genera is not. By all but some sensible

THE PLUM

sceptics, such as Varro, it was thought that apples would grow on plane trees, and nuts on *Arbutus unido* and much other similar nonsense. Nor were such curious beliefs confined to antiquity: in 1790 a gentleman, who had no doubt received a classical education and was perhaps as credulous as Pliny, advised Speechley, the greatest of English vine growers, to graft his grape-vines on cherry-trees, for quick results.

But it was from such excesses in Roman Imperial times that the art of imping came to Western Europe. Who were the gardeners who developed this skill and passed it on to us? They were Syrian—mostly Jewish and Lebanese—slaves, and they had already passed on to the Greeks some of the skill which they had from, perhaps, the Phœnicians, who, possibly, had it from the gardeners of Babylon or Kish or Ur of the Chaldees. For although the Roman gentry undoubtedly had their gardeners from Syria, their word for grafting and kindred arts was not Syrian, but Greek.

Our word *graft* is the French *greffe*, the origin of which seems to be obscure. But there is no such obscurity about the derivation of *imp*, *imping*: the *impotus* of the Lex Salica, the German *impfen*, French *ente*, and the English word all come via Latin from the Greek *em-phytos*, *in-plant* or *implant*.

Not only the imping of plum-trees but some of the trees themselves came into Europe from Syria. The myrobalans, *Mirabelles*, cherry-plums, came by way of Syria, but ultimately from much farther away. The Syrians had them from Persia but even that does not take us back to their original habitat. For the Persian name for these plum-trees was *halila- i kabuli* * which apparently is tantamount to calling them fruit from Kabul. Botany confirms this: the myrobalans are natives of Northern India. Their name

is said—Heyn does not confirm this—to come from an Indian word, *myrobalanos*, the name of a fruit used for making ointment, borrowed later by the Greeks to designate a small, yellow plum, and by us, via France, from the Greeks.

By way of Persia and Syria and Thrace these hardy plums colonized large tracts of Central Europe, in some places so successfully as to form forests of plum trees. The natives of the countries concerned may possibly have invented the most important product of the tree—raki, or slivoviz, for themselves; but even this is not certain. For although Heyn says that to make a drink of berries in which the North-East of Europe is rich, is an old Slavonian or East European national trait, it is also a fact that *Mirabelles* were made into wine or some such strong drink, in Persia, at a very early date: the fact is recorded by Tou Kin in *The Treatise on Wine*, and the ingredients mentioned include three varieties of *Mirabelles*.

The plum proper, in some of its many varieties, only reached Italy not very long before Cato's time but rapidly established itself. Virgil, Ovid and Horace all have something to say about it. The plums in Horace's garden were budded on to blackthorn.

By Pliny's time of the very numerous varieties in Italian and Gallic gardens, the Damascene plum was thought the finest. It is all the more curious that this name—not so greatly altered in the sound—*damson*, should have come down to us as the least, although still one of the most valuable of plums. The reason is, however, clear: the Romans tended to call all plums damascenes, or damsons, so that our retention of the general name for the most commonplace kind is not illogical. Later the Romans borrowed the name

* See B. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*.

proumnon—the Greek wild plum—making *prunus* of it. But since the Greeks had earlier to distinguish between their native tree and the improved plums from Syria, they themselves called plums *kokkymelon*—the first half of the word is Oriental, but I cannot find its meaning anywhere explained.

Although it has been possible to trace the mirabelles back to their source in Northern India, the finer plums cannot be taken with any certainty beyond Syria. It is likely enough that the work of improving upon some wild Persian species may have been done in that country. The mirabelles would

have been distributed both deliberately, for their hardiness in countries with cold winters and hot summers; and by naturalization. The damsons and finer plums however would only have colonized new countries when the skill of the gardener was adequate to their care and propagation. This is what happened in Britain; hence the two widely separated introductions. And no doubt it is also what happened in all those countries under the influence of Syria's advanced civilization during the initial phases of the rise of Western culture.

EDWARD HYAMS.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

From *The National Review*, May, 1904.

FEW events in our time have caused such genuine satisfaction throughout all classes of the community as the Anglo-French Agreement, which clears away our long-standing difficulties with France. Although there is not that sustained study of foreign policy in this country which characterizes certain Continental nations, the sound political instinct of the average Englishman enables him to grasp the profound importance of this new departure, and its wider international aspects contribute to its popularity no less than its settlement of current controversies. The Foreign Office was exasperatingly slow in realizing that public opinion was in revolt against the Anglo-German *régime*, which seemed to the unthinking official world to offer the line of least resistance, and which was consequently pursued year after year through much tribulation and humiliation. Downing Street was content to be the phonograph of the Wilhelmstrasse. It required the outbursts of popular indignation which make the words "Venezuela" and "Baghdad" so unpleasant to official

ears, before our Ministers grasped the fact that the days of Anglo-Germanism were numbered. It must be said to the credit of Lord Lansdowne and his advisers, that having once appreciated the necessity for a new policy, they did the thing handsomely, and they are to be warmly congratulated on the whole spirit and temper of their present handiwork. The Anglo-French Agreement consummates the emancipation of England from the German yoke which commenced last year, and we venture to say it affords a complete vindication of those who in season and out of season have pressed the view that when once other Powers saw that England was no longer the satellite of Germany, our statesmen would have comparatively little difficulty in doing business with them. After all it was only natural that the French should view us with the deepest suspicion so long as we behaved like secret members of the Triple Alliance, and guarantors of the odious Treaty of Frankfurt. Directly France saw that we had ceased to Germanize, she approached us in a totally different spirit, and with every desire to come to friendly terms. That in a word is the history of the Anglo-French Agreement.

BOOKS NEW AND OLD

A PRESENT FOR EVERYMAN*

By ERIC GILLETT

THE recent meeting of the Classical Association, with some wise and timely words from Professor Gilbert Murray, came as a reminder that for years now people have been growing up who know little or nothing about the literature of ancient Greece. Thirty or forty years ago many who could not read a line of the old language knew something about its drama because they had seen one or more of Professor Murray's admirable English versions acted on the stage. It was the custom to refer to his especially apt renderings of the plays of Euripides as "felicitous," and so they were, and in *Euripides and His Age* and in his other books and brilliant lectures Dr. Murray did at least as much for the cause so near to his heart as anyone has ever done.

Unfortunately a time came, somewhere in the 'thirties, when a notion sprang up that if Greek plays were to be effective in English dress they must be less musical and rather more like the English verse which was being written at the time. I remember sitting through at least one rendering of the translated *Œdipus* from which the purveyor had successfully removed most of the poetry. It was, in its way, a remarkable achievement. It was, also, a tragedy, because in these days of crowded educational syllabuses there is rarely room for Greek in a young person's education, and there is so much to be learned from the Hellenic storehouse of poetry, wisdom and wit that it is imperative, if its tradition is to be preserved, that every twenty or thirty years a new enthusiast should appear who will make new renderings and urge upon fresh generations that

they will miss a great deal if they do not acquaint themselves with some of the outstanding examples of Greek literature.

A few years ago Mr. F. L. Lucas brought out *Greek Poetry for Everyman*, and it was received with enthusiasm by critics and scholars. Dr. Murray noted that he picked the book up in a critical spirit but soon forgot criticism and read on for pure pleasure. This is not surprising when one recalls Mr. Lucas's outstanding record of scholarship and literary production over the past thirty years or so. He is one of the fortunate-unhappy people who can do everything so well that his work has come to be taken almost as a matter of course. His edition of the works of John Webster is a model of what such things should be. His critical and expository writings—and I have an especially high regard for *The Decline and Fall of the Romantic Ideal*—are truly valuable and helpful. There is nothing of the exhibitionist scholar about Mr. Lucas. His eye remains on his work. As a creative writer he has so nearly touched the heights as novelist, playwright and poet. He is, without the slightest doubt, one of the most accomplished and versatile men of letters of his time, but nothing that he has done is likely

* *Greek Drama for Everyman*. Chosen and Translated by F. L. Lucas. J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd. 21s.

Jonathan Swift. A Critical Biography. By John Middleton Murry. Jonathan Cape. 30s.

The Tigers of Trengganu. By Lt.-Col. A. Locke, with a Foreword by the Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald. Museum Press Ltd. 16s.

The Spanish Temper. By V. S. Pritchett. Chatto & Windus. 15s.

Temples of the Sun and Moon. A Mexican Journey. By Michael Swan. Jonathan Cape. 21s.

to surpass in importance his *Greek Poetry for Everyman* and its companion book, only just published, *Greek Drama for Everyman*.

It is pleasant to find upon the title page a saying of Professor H. W. Garrod, "that a man could hardly be better employed than in interesting students in the best of Greek and Latin literature," when one recalls that for very many years Mr. Lucas has been Cambridge University Reader in *English*. There is nothing incompatible here. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch used often to say how much he disliked the practice of the English School at Oxford where it was considered necessary that an undergraduate should satisfy the examiners not only of his knowledge of "modern" literature (anything since Chaucer) but also indicate that he had a smattering of Anglo-Saxon, or "the language" as it used to be called by the earnest young ladies from Somerville and L.M.H. "Q" wrote a delightful lecture, *The Commerce of Thought*, to show that the English tradition in literature came from the continent and he placed the greatest possible importance on keeping alive for young people some idea of the tremendous heritage of Greece and Rome. I have no idea whether Mr. Lucas derived any of his early inspiration from "Q" but I am sure that he would have approved wholeheartedly of Mr. Lucas's *Greek Drama for Everyman*, which is an extraordinary achievement.

It is said that there survive of Greek tragedy, apart from fragments, thirty-three plays, about fifty thousand lines, of which seven are by Aeschylus, seven by Sophocles, and nineteen by Euripides. There remains of Greek comedy eleven plays of Aristophanes, and some long fragments of Menander.

In the present volume Mr. Lucas presents translations of Aeschylus'

Prometheus and Agamemnon, Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Œdipus the King*, Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Bacchæ* and Aristophanes' *Clouds*. He gives, too, summaries with extracts of the other thirty-seven plays, and also what seem to him to be the best fragments of lost plays. He has provided the book with introductions and commentaries exactly designed to entice any enterprising reader on from page to page. In fact almost the only minute criticism of this excellent venture I can make is that it seems odd for Mr. Lucas, catering for "Everyman," to deck his pages with several stiff French quotations, which he does not translate.

Here and there the reader is given a hint of something almost Saintsburian about Mr. Lucas, as, for instance, when the question arises to rhyme or not to rhyme? Having tried both, his answer is "Rhyme," and he quotes from Fielding's *Amelia*: "Rhymes are difficult things; they are stubborn things, sir. I have been sometimes longer in tagging a couplet, than I have been in writing a speech on the side of the opposition, which hath been read with great applause all over the kingdom."

The whole of the "Preface" might be read with profit by intending translators. The classical translator's first duty is simply to aim at giving sensitive readers the same sort of pleasure as they would get from reading the original with a reasonable knowledge of classics. The translator's second duty is to be true to the spirit and personality of his author. His third is to be true to the spirit, the atmosphere of an author's period. This is tricky, and it does not mean affected archaism or the equivalent of Gothic garages. "If," says Mr. Lucas, "the original gives me a feeling of venerable antiquity, I am as little grateful as Aladdin for having my old lamp replaced by some garishly

up-to-date article, with all the magic gone. Our predecessors romanticized; we vulgarize." Mr. Lucas's ultimate purpose, which is of almost Machiavelian subtlety—too subtle for the present time—is to make readers dissatisfied with his versions and send them to take correspondence courses in ancient Greek and so read these masterpieces in the original, but, and here the Reader in English has a say, "Attic drama was never to regain the supreme heights of Homer, or to rival those of Shakespeare." This is fair comment, and it is typical of Mr. Lucas's judicious attitude which has shaped the form and pattern of a fascinating book. *Greek Drama for Everyman* is intended for the ordinary British reader, and if he or she neglects it, the loss will be his or hers. There is beauty and a precision of style in the old Greek plays, and in these versions which is rare among writers in English, but no one would deny that Dean Swift exhibited a similar precision in his prose. Mr. Middleton Murry's new critical biography, *Jonathan Swift*, is described not as the product of original research into unpublished material but as the result of some years of study of Swift's writings. It is at once a life of Swift and a critical study of his works, and Mr. Middleton Murry takes the view that where the materials for the biography of a great writer are available, the study of his life and work fructify each other. If they are held apart, a degree of illumination is likely to be withheld.

Swift was, probably, the most unpleasant character in the whole range of eighteenth century writers, who were not a very likeable company. It was not altogether his fault that he suffered from an overweening and terrible pride, and having little to lose but everything to gain he treated members of the Government as equals or inferiors and demanded an apology

from Harley, who knowing that he was hard up and thinking to help him, sent him a bank-bill for £50. It was immediately returned, and Swift noted in his journal that an *amende* had been made. "I have taken Mr. Harley into favour again," was his regal comment. Another unamiable characteristic was to expect that people should come and greet him. There are various instances in the *Journal to Stella*. "I generally am acquainted with about thirty in the drawing-room, and am so proud that I make all the lords come up to me. One passes half an hour pleasant enough." To the ladies he was ruder still. On occasions his behaviour was sadistic. When the Duchess of Shrewsbury reproached him for not dining with her, Swift replied that that was not so soon done, "for I expected more advances from ladies, especially duchesses: She promised to comply." It is difficult to imagine anything more arrogant than this. He was not as other men are and he knew it. He had twenty years of insults, or what were insults to him without revenge and his expectations were raised and his hopes crushed more often than those of others who had no such violent ambitions. In the end he became a destructive force, with a passion for wounding and offending any he considered to be his enemies. He tortured the few who loved him and his behaviour to Esther Johnson, whom he married, was on a par with everything else that he did. Yet there was some quality about Swift which could move men to profound pity. There is an anecdote of Delany who found Archbishop King in tears, and Swift rushing by with a countenance full of grief and a distracted air. "Sir," said the Archbishop, "you have just met the most unhappy man upon earth; but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question."

The handicap which Swift imposed upon himself throughout his literary life was one that he shared with Bernard Shaw. He does not write for mankind except, perhaps, in *Gulliver's Travels*. He addresses himself to a section of the community on subjects of ephemeral importance. Taine was right when he maintained that Swift was too superior to embrace heartily a religious sect or a political party, too narrow-minded to find solace in the high doctrines which reconcile all beliefs or in the wide sympathies which are common to all parties. He was a misanthrope and a sceptic, a man of great genius whose qualities stamped him as a fugitive from happiness, love, friendship, and authority. Mr. Middleton Murry has written a critical Life which is comprehensive, scholarly, and readable. There are some revealing appendices and an index to the writings of Swift mentioned in the text, but it does not make up for a full record of the places and people, whose names should certainly be listed in an additional index in the second edition.

It was with some relief that I turned to the less vehement performances of *The Tigers of Trengganu* as recorded by Lieut.-Colonel A. Locke of the Malayan Civil Service. Colonel Locke worked as a District Officer in this remote state in North-Eastern Malaya, and soon found himself doing the kind of thing which Colonel Corbett has described so fascinatingly in *The Man Eaters of Kumaon* and other works. His work was not made easier by the Communists who were also operating in the area. If one is to believe Colonel Locke, they seem to have caused him rather less trouble than the tigers did. *The Tigers of Trengganu* is a notable addition to the already distinguished library of books on Malaya, and Mr. Malcolm MacDonald is right to claim for it the status of a Malayan classic.

Colonel Locke is a master of understatement and he seems to have had some difficulty in getting his story under way. His first four chapters are interesting enough as they describe the background, distribution, diet, kills and area covered by the tigers, with some account of how they are hunted. By this time he is well into his stride and the Jerangau man-eater and the Kijal twins are worthy to be included in Colonel Corbett's gallery.

The Malayan tiger is rather smaller than the Indian variety but he has much the same characteristics. He goes his own way and lives on a wild diet unless he is unable to get his usual food. Then he becomes a nuisance, eating first domestic animals, then natives of the country, and finally Europeans, in strict order of preference. It seems that there is something most unappetising about the occidental to the tiger mind. If the ordinary, as opposed to the man-eating, tiger or tigress meets human beings, he will almost always pass them by. Colonel Locke has an astonishing anecdote of a Malay who was leading a large bull buffalo back from its work when they met a tigress and her cub lying up in long grass. The tigress sprang and clawed the man. It is clear that she intended to chase him away. Three times she attacked and each time the buffalo drove her off. The sequel is agreeable:

When he finally reached the main road, the man met some other Malays, who placed him in a trishaw and sent him off to hospital, so that his wounds might be cleaned and dressed. The buffalo was determined not to leave his master, however, and trotted heavily along behind the trishaw until they reached the township. There he stopped, eyeing the retreating vehicle in doubt, before turning and making his solitary way home again. Malays who met him on the road told me afterwards that he walked with a definite

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swagger, punctuated by an arrogant shaking of his great head and by self-congratulatory snorts and grunts.

A final chapter is devoted to the charming Malaya superstitions and folk-tales about tigers and other jungle animals. They are among the world's best in this kind.

Mr. V. S. Pritchett, assuming that the reader has read his Guide and knows at least a little about the country, presents a personal book, *The Spanish Temper*. He lived in Spain for two years in the 'twenties, and feels that the effects of the experience were "drastic and permanent," adding that the sight of the landscape of Castile changed his life. As Mr. Pritchett is always a most scrupulous writer, in addition to being a very good one, with leftist views, what he has to say may be read with careful attention. Taking the view that Spain is the old and necessary enemy of the West, a country in which one may be more frankly frightened than either in France or in Italy, Mr. Pritchett has always been so fascinated by it that he returned there in 1951 and in 1952 to find it overrun by tourists in the show places, often greatly changed on the surface, poor in body, stunned in mind, but not fundamentally changed. *The Spanish Temper* is a civilized book, literary and full of ideas and speculations. At heart Mr. Pritchett is a traditionalist. He believes that almost any chapter of *Don Quixote* "contains all other books on Spain." He notes the Spanish habit of disagreeing with most things said about their country, their pride, their delightful courtesy and frankness. Anyone who is searching for an introduction to Spanish life and thought might turn to *The Spanish Temper* as a supplement to Mr. Gerald Brenan's books on Spain. It is vivid, well written and provocative.

Mr. Michael Swan's Mexican journey took him to the *Temples of the Sun and Moon*, and he has neatly tucked away in one appendix a thumbnail sketch of Mexico's history, and in a second, an historical account of Mexican art. Mr. Swan is a frank traveller, who seems to have attracted incident. A Seventh Day Adventist missionary was stoned and almost killed by a horse's hoofs under his eyes. He encountered ancient fertility rites. He spent a social evening with a character named Pepé, who ended the session by throwing an epileptic fit. The book is full of strange meetings and travels. There is a vivid section which deals with the author's travels through Chiapas and Yucatan, the land of the great Maya civilization. There is an account of Palenque with its remarkable temple where Dr. Ruiz recently discovered a funeral chamber with stuccoes and sculpture of great beauty. At Bonampak he saw the fine frescoes, the only examples of Maya painting extant.

Temples of the Sun and Moon is an exceptionally well written record of what must have been an enthralling and sometimes hideously uncomfortable journey. The publisher and author can be congratulated on one of the most beautifully produced travel books I have ever seen. Binding, printing, end papers and illustrations are just what they ought to be, and at the price, the book is a bargain.

If Mr. Swan and his intrepid contemporaries continue to find their way into the remote places of the earth, there will soon be nothing left for conjecture, and everyone will know what is on the other side of the hill. It is, perhaps, good news that new planets may soon be available.

ERIC GILLET.

QUIET RULER

AS IT HAPPENED. By Right Hon. C. R. Attlee. *Heinemann*. 16s.

MR. ATTLEE'S autobiography has not, so far, had a very good Press. It is not difficult to see why. Sir Harold Nicolson, once remarked that reticence makes a man a rotten autobiographer; and Mr. Attlee is a very reticent man indeed. Regular readers of this Review will recall that, in the January number, Mr. Attlee wrote most enthrallingly about his personal tastes in reading; but there are very few intimate revelations of this kind in *As it Happened*, and Mr. Attlee clearly does not care for making them except in response to some special request. Must this book, then, be written off as a disappointment? For myself, I do not think so. I personally regret that Mr. Attlee has never kept a diary, so that he cannot give us—for example—his own contemporary record of controversial events such as the crisis of 1931. Also, I feel that he has been altogether too discreet in declining to give us any pen-portraits of contemporary politicians, with the sole exception of Sir Winston Churchill. Of course Mr. Attlee's distaste for gossip is wholly commendable, and I entirely agree with the view expressed by Mr. Hugh Trevor-Roper, that Mr. Attlee always comes well out of personal squabbles within the Labour Party, precisely because he refuses to be dragged down into the middle of them. Even so, pen-portraits can be the most attractive feature of an autobiography, and I regret that Mr. Attlee should have been quite so sparing of them. None the less, this is in my view both a valuable and a highly interesting book, for two reasons. It is a perfectly faithful self-portrait of a most remarkable Prime Minister and Party Leader, and it does throw some light on recent British politics, especially since the war. It is a book which deserves to be read carefully, since Mr. Attlee's reticence and the quietness of his style make it very easy to miss the significance of some of his most interesting disclosures.

The early chapters, which describe Mr.

Attlee's youth, and his conversion to Socialism as a social worker in East London, are perhaps the best in the entire book. I quote Mr. Attlee's description of how he became a Socialist, partly because it is so revealing of his personality, and partly because it affords so admirable an example of his style of writing:

I soon began to learn [in Stepney] many things which had hitherto been unrevealed. I found there was a different social code. Thrift, so dear to the middle classes, was not esteemed so highly as generosity. The Christian virtue of charity was practised, not merely preached. I recall a boy in the club living in two rooms with his widowed mother. He earned seven shillings and sixpence a week. A neighbouring family, where there was no income coming in, were thrown on to the street by the landlord. The boy and his mother took them all into their own little home. . . .

I found abundant instances of kindness and much quiet heroism in these mean streets. These people were not poor through their lack of fine qualities. The slums were not filled with the dregs of society. Not only did I have countless lessons in practical economics, but there was kindled in me a warmth and affection for these people that has remained with me all my life.

From this it was only a step to examining the whole basis of our social and economic system. I soon began to realize the curse of casual labour. I got to know what slum landlordism and sweating meant. I understood why the Poor Law was so hated. I learned also why there were rebels.

My elder brother, Tom, was an architect and a great reader of Ruskin and Morris. I too admired these great men and began to understand their social gospel. My brother was helping at the Maurice Hostel in the near-by Hoxton district of London. Our reading became more extensive. After looking into many social reform ideas—such as co-partnership—we both came to the conclusion that the economic and ethical basis of society was wrong. We became socialists.

The intensity of this passage, and the short sentences—so characteristic of the author—are very remarkable. What a wealth of meaning is contained in that word “un-

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revealed" in the first sentence of this extract! Mr. Attlee was not exactly a convert to Socialism, because one feels that he had never really acquired any very deep convictions about politics or economics before he discovered life in the East End. This life was to him indeed a revelation—a revelation of life in the raw and of real, as opposed to conventional, morality. One feels that from that moment, Mr. Attlee has never for an instant doubted the rightness of his beliefs, and it is this serene confidence in the ethical superiority of his creed which accounts for so much of his success as a party leader.

The chapters which describe the inter-war years show very clearly what an amazing chance it was that Mr. Attlee ever obtained the leadership of his party. He was only a junior Minister in 1924, and he was not originally included in the Government of 1929; nor in that Government did he ever rise to a higher position than that of Postmaster-General. But the accident of his survival in the election of 1931 by a mere 550 votes not only greatly enhanced his standing in the party, but also gave him the opportunity of gaining vast experience as a parliamentary debater. He tells us that in the session of 1932 to 1933 he filled more columns of *Hansard* than any other Member, which is indeed astonishing when one recalls that his style of speech is usually brief and to the point. He has some harsh things to say about Ramsay MacDonald, and also about his pacifist friends in the Labour Party "who seemed to think that an inefficient army is less wicked than an efficient one, a point of view to which I was unable to subscribe." He admits that the country owed Baldwin a great debt of gratitude for the way in which he handled the Abdication Crisis of 1936. "The Party," he tells us, "with the exception of a few of the intelligentsia who can be trusted to take the wrong view on any subject, were in agreement with the views I had expressed." Mr. Attlee's quiet style makes him all the more effective on the rare occasions when he decides to be caustic. (Later in the book he makes some sharp comments about Harold Laski as Chairman of the

Party Executive, though he does not quote the famous letter in which he told Laski that "a period of silence on your part would be welcome!") There is just one criticism which must be made of this section of the book. I am sorry that Mr. Attlee should have referred to the 1931 General Election as "the most unscrupulous in my recollection," and also that he should have alluded to "the lying story that the Labour Government had improperly used the money in the Post Office Savings Bank to maintain the Unemployment Fund." Mr. Attlee's former colleague, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, made it perfectly clear in his own autobiography that the widely believed facts on which the "lying story" was based were substantially true.

The chapters on the war are not especially interesting, but there is an important admission (on page 140) that the war provided an admirable forcing house for the growth of Socialist ideas and policies.

Usually, applying our minds to the actual problems which faced us, we came to an agreement as to what was the best course. *Quite naturally, in war, where the public good must take precedence over private interests, the solutions had a strong socialist flavour.* (My italics.)

This sentence seems to me fully to justify those, who like myself, have frequently said that "Socialist planning" consisted very largely of perpetuating a wartime economic system in peacetime. Incidentally, Mr. Attlee shows very clearly the distinction between Conservatives and Socialists when he says in a later chapter:

In the Second World War there had been far more equality of sacrifice than in the First World War. Profiteering had been repressed, rationing had been better managed, high rates of interest had not been allowed and very heavy taxation had been imposed.

It was difficult to argue that what had been done in war with such good results should not be continued in peace, especially in view of the situation in which the country was placed.

On the contrary, I think all my colleagues would agree with the point of view so cogently expressed by Professor Lionel Robbins on numerous occasions—that suppressed inflation, more or less held in check by an elaborate system of fiscal controls, was inevitable in wartime, but intolerable in peacetime, especially for a trading nation like Great Britain.

There are six chapters on the Labour Government of 1945/51, and an epilogue which tells of Mr. Attlee's return to the office of Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Attlee pays the warmest possible tributes to Bevin and Cripps. Reading these chapters, I realize as never before how neither Mr. Attlee's leadership, nor the corporate strength of the parliamentary Labour Party, has ever quite recovered from the loss of these two men. It is, incidentally, rather remarkable that, whereas Mr. Attlee is in general very sparing of quotations from his own speeches and writings, he quotes in full the obituaries which he pronounced in the House of Commons on Bevin, Cripps and King George VI. One thing which emerges very clearly from these chapters is that Mr. Attlee is not just a reformer, but a Socialist. When he told the American magazine *Look* that Socialism "goes right on," he meant just what he said. There is a particularly revealing passage on page 163:

... the kind of reproach levelled at us by Churchill, that, instead of uniting the country by a programme of social reform on the lines of the Beveridge Report, we were following a course dictated by social prejudice or theory, left us completely unmoved. We had not been elected to try to patch up an old system but to make something new. Our policy was not a reformed capitalism but progress toward a democratic socialism.

And on the very next page he describes how he not only gave his Ministers orders to prepare nationalization schemes for the Bank of England, for fuel and power, and for transport, but that in addition he told his Minister of Supply to prepare legislation for nationalizing iron and steel. Doubtless there were members of his Cabinet who questioned whether this last

step was wise, but I am sure that Mr. Attlee himself never faltered. He had the reputation among Labour speakers who visited Oxford after the War of being the leader in the Cabinet of those who favoured going full steam ahead with projects of nationalization. And this autobiography makes it clear that this reputation was fully justified. I do hope that this book will put an end to the silly talk about Mr. Attlee being a "moderate," who is on the "right wing" of his own party.

The chapter on the Commonwealth is one of the very best in the book, partly because Mr. Attlee has no inhibitions about describing the Commonwealth statesmen with whom he was in such close contact. It is interesting to learn that Lord Wavell was replaced as Viceroy of India because he and his chief Service advisers "were despondent and could only suggest a progressive retirement from India province by province." It is strange that this great man should have been so subject to moods of abject defeatism; one recalls his equally despondent attitude in Africa during the months before he was replaced by Auchinleck, and also his defeatism in South-East Asia during the winter of 1941, before the fall of Singapore.

The last chapter, which describes the background to the election of 1951 and its sequel, contains two revelations which are of considerable interest. First, it is quite clear that Mr. Attlee never for a moment realized the damage which the rearmament programme would do to Britain's balance of payments unless steps were taken to make room for it in the economy. He tells us that, so far as he was concerned, the only limiting factors were the availability of raw materials and machine tools, and the level of prices. I have often felt in debates that Mr. Attlee has never appreciated the connection between Britain's internal economic policy and Britain's ability to pay her way in the markets of the world. No doubt his early lessons in "practical economics" in the East End of London have given him a bias which he has never been able to correct towards thinking in terms of a closed economy. Secondly, Mr. Attlee virtually admits that

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the very heavy Conservative pressure in the division lobbies during the Spring and Summer of 1951 made him decide on an Autumn election before the House rose for the August recess. Like many other people, he greatly overstates the significance of the "prayer campaign" in March, 1951, which actually only lasted for four nights before the Government found a means of bringing it to an end. But I am quite sure myself that the Conservative efforts in the division lobbies during the discussions of Mr. Gaitskell's very controversial Finance Bill were not wasted, and I hope that future historians will give due credit to Mr. Buchan-Hepburn and his colleagues in the Whips' Office for their part in bringing the Parliament of 1950/51 to an early end. Mr. Attlee does not say anything at all about the "war-mongering" scare in his account of the 1951 election. He merely remarks with some satisfaction that Labour received "the biggest vote" ever given to any political party in our history.

There are hints in this book of Mr. Attlee's capacity ruthlessness in dealing with individuals, which is one of his most effective attributes as a party leader. He admits that he told one or two of his colleagues, as is well known, that he thought they were not up to their jobs. And he is definitely cool in his appraisal of Sir Winston Churchill, even as a wartime leader. I do not think anyone who reads this book will be surprised to learn that Mr. Attlee is always at his most effective when he has to follow Churchill in debate. Incidentally, as Francis Williams very fairly pointed out several years ago, he is very much less effective when he has to follow Eden.

I do not think I can end better than by quoting Mr. Attlee's own final paragraph:

In closing these chapters from my life story, I recall the old saying, "Call no man happy until he is dead." But having now exceeded the age of three score years and ten I would say that up to the present I have been a very happy and fortunate man in having lived so long in the greatest country in the world, in having a happy family life and in having been given the opportunity

of serving in a state of life to which I had never expected to be called.

I feel that these words sum up admirably both Mr. Attlee's strength and his limitations. His reticence is in the highest degree commendable; it is the reticence of a man who honestly believes that the cause which he serves is more important than himself. And yet one cannot help wondering whether Mr. Attlee has really helped Britain to remain "the greatest country in the world," whether Socialism has altogether helped to foster "a happy family life," and whether a Prime Minister one of whose colleagues so proudly remarked that "We are the masters now" is fully entitled to speak of his "opportunity of serving." Mr. Attlee's self-sufficiency cannot but evoke admiration and yet—I feel I must say it—one wonders whether it is altogether free from the taint of smugness. As I read this book I could not help frequently recalling a most telling phrase which I once heard in a speech by Sir David Eccles—"the small-town snobbery of British Socialism." One feels that there are whole dimensions of life which lie far beyond the range of Mr. Attlee's comprehension.

EDWARD BOYLE.

HAND OF GLORY?

THE ANNOTATOR. By Alan Keen and Roger Lubbock. *Putnam*. 21s.

I BEGAN to read this book on a train journey to Oxford. It was the shortest journey I remember; and throughout the afternoon, at an O.U.D.S. performance of *King John*, my mind kept flicking back to the extraordinary piece of detection in the book with the presumed Grafton Portrait of the young Shakespeare on its jacket. A secondary title is, simply, "The Pursuit of an Elizabethan Reader of Halle's *Chronicle* Involving Some Surmises About the Early Life of William Shakespeare." No trumpet-call there; but if the authors' tale is believed, then the "hidden years" of the young Shakespeare—between Stratford and London—are clarified, and we have some 400 notes in the young man's own hand. A fantastic position indeed

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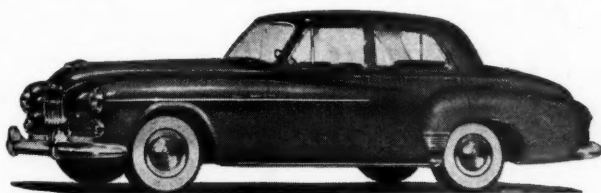
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after centuries spent in groping for one trivial point here, another speculation there.

The authors have a strong case. They are not dogmatic about it. They merely state their scheme of inferences and possibilities and leave the rest to the reader. And the reader, faced with this cairn of evidence, will not feel like trying too hastily to topple it over. The story might be material for a moralizing "Eyes and No Eyes" dissertation. During the hot midsummer of 1940, two months or so before the London "blitz," Mr. Keen, an antiquarian bookseller in London, was glancing through a folio copy of the fourth issue of Edward Halle's *Chronicle* (1550). He had bought it in a bundle of uncatalogued books from a Yorkshire house, with a dilapidated Bible and dictionary. One of the volumes still held an auction slip of a previous sale (un-

traced). There had been a buyer with no idea at all of potential treasure in this thick, imperfect, re-bound, and "cropped" folio of the Tudor historian: a book that seemed to lack evidence of previous ownership except a non-committal library pressmark from the 18th century. (Later the name of "Rychard Newport" was discovered twice in blank margins.)

Mr. Keen had the eyes, or the interest, that the previous buyer had needed. He noticed, as he opened the book at random, certain marginal notes in Elizabethan handwriting that summarized aptly the main points in the narrative of the reigns of Henry the Fourth and Henry the Fifth. Typical notes were these: "A sleight aunsner to the embassadeurs. A tonne of tennes balles sent as ys reported"; and "A prophecie of the Mollwarpe, the dragon the lyon the wolff." Alan Keen began to wonder whether he did not know the handwriting. He started to probe. To-day a compactly-told record of fourteen years of research holds what may be infinite riches in a little room.

Taking the view that the notes could have been the young Shakespeare's, Mr. Keen set out to find corroboration. What he did find, and what he and Mr. Lubbock have set out, is a chain of remarkable linked facts—too many, I would say, to be dismissed as coincidental. The genealogical tables at the back are themselves a good two hours' reading if one begins to study them with care and to relate the facts to each other.

The *Chronicle*, it was discovered, had belonged to Sir Richard Newport of High Ercall in Shropshire. How did Shakespeare—if he were indeed the commentator—come into possession of it? For that I must direct you to the book, for this is a detective story that should be followed from the first clue if the right pattern is to emerge: a pattern, as the authors say, of "the poet's relatives, patrons, fellows, business associates, and trustees from boyhood to maturity," and "a tapestry of the midland and northern counties of Elizabethan England; a tapestry of noble houses, manors, and theatres, peopled with Shakespeare's familiars."

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Hand of Glory ?

son of a Catholic recusant, once a "singing-boy" at Lea Hall in Lancashire, on the north side of the Ribble estuary, and later a member of Sir Thomas Hesketh's players at Rufford? Did he meet in those days his model for Malvolio? Did he ever go to Shropshire? Mr. Keen and Mr. Lubbock offer their evidence in a book with a full apparatus of appendices and some admirable plates. This is not a final solution of the problem of the "hidden years"; but, if its surmises are accepted, it will chart a pathway through what we had held to be an almost impenetrable tangle of briers.

The journey back from Oxford was as short as the outward journey had been. And, now I think of it, that sentence may have two meanings. If the Lubbock-Keen theory is feasible, what flutterings and what alarms! Where is the reply from the "Oxfordian" camp? (And, for that matter, from the Baconians?)

J. C. TREWIN.

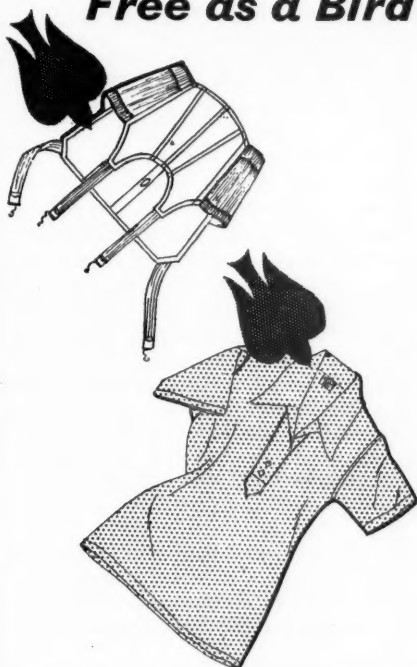
FRENCH AND ENGLISH

THE ADVENTURES OF JOHN WETHERELL.

Edited and with an Introduction by C. S. Forester. *Michael Joseph Ltd.* 18s.

THIS book, which claims to be the authentic diary of a nineteenth-century British seaman impressed into the service to fight Napoleon, is in some ways disappointing, as it is clearly not altogether authentic, and it is difficult to determine, in spite of Mr. Forester's admirable editing, the moments at which authenticity ceases and imagination begins. Furthermore, the language and syntax of the diarist are extremely difficult to follow, although he was clearly a man of good education and superior ability. Mr. Forester's introduction is a fine and objective piece of work, packed tight with knowledge of the subject, the fruit of a lifetime's study of naval history, particularly that of this period. Between them, diarist and editor vividly bring before us the appalling lives led by impressed men in the King's navy during these wars, the

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inconceivable ferocity and sadism of many of the captains—six-dozen lashes of the cat for trivial offences—the filthy food, weevils crawling out of the biscuits, and the scenes of horror in the cockpit after an action, when, by the flickering light of lanterns, limbs were hacked off and great splinters of wood pulled out with pincers from the breasts of screaming men, while their mates sat on their heads and held them down to the floor. On such occasions the scenes in the cockpit must have resembled some canto in Dante's *Inferno*. Many of the sailors had to endure these conditions for three years or more without seeing their homes. All this was horrible, but we should place these facts in the perspective of their age, and observe Mr. Forester's sage remarks:—

... Flogging was still a common and legal punishment in ordinary life. While civilians were still being legally and publicly flogged it would be Utopian to hope that soldiers

and sailors could be made exempt . . . the sailors stayed at sea literally for years without a moment on shore, and they had to endure the consequent hardships of bad food and unhealthy living conditions . . . in that case what was to be done with the recalcitrant, the lazy, the rebellious?

If a man were locked up it was a welcome relief from the hell of life on deck. His rations could not be cut if he was to work; useless to stop his pay as he could not spend it for years to come. Wetherell was unlucky in his captain on the *Hussar*, Wilkinson, a sadist who enjoyed seeing the backbone of the men he flogged, who was dismissed his first ship for brutality, and piled his second up on the rocks, a total loss. Of course, such captains were by no means the rule. Many were enlightened men who preferred to lead rather than drive, such captains as Mr. Forester described in another work, who classified sea urchins and corresponded with Cuvier.

It is pleasant to turn, in my case, with amazement, to the treatment the sailors received at the hands of their French captors. This forms the most attractive part of the diaries. The prisoners, having landed with dread in their hearts, were marched in parties under escort by stages of 20–30 miles a day to their destination. Careful billeting arrangements were made for them at each halt for the night. They were treated in every way as the French treated their own people, given good food, wine and bedding, and above all treated with kindness and humanity. So staggered were they by these conditions, quite contrary to what they had feared, and to those to which they were accustomed on board ship, that many of these gaunt brutalized creatures wept like children. They were encouraged to learn and practise every form of trade and craftsmanship and the prisons hummed like factories with the din of their industry.

It is a noble chapter in the history of France, and causes one to reflect with shame and anger on the treatment meted out to many of our prisoners by the enemy in the last war.

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Jenkins. *Gollancz.* 12s. 6d.

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Allen. 12s. 6d.

THE PAINTED KING. Rhys Davies. *Heine-*
mann. 12s. 6d.

GENERAL FROM THE JUNGLE. B. Traven.
Hale. 10s. 6d.

GOLD WAS OUR GRAVE. Henry Wade.
Constable. 10s. 6d.

THERE are two themes in *The End of an Old Song*, each simple enough; there is no great throng of characters nor are they complex; and the book is on the short side: but the reader feels that it is on the grand scale. The reason is that J. D. Scott achieves his effects, whether description of scene or creation of character, with a laudable economy (which covers management) of words. There I am tempted to leave it, for to compress the story is to exaggerate its simplicity. Theme A: a fine Scottish house has to be leased by its romantic last owner to a Glasgow magnate, then is requisitioned, finally is burnt. Theme B: Alastair, said to be the owner's bastard, able, ambitious, marries the magnate's daughter who is half Scot, half snob-English. The book is well advanced before the wedding, prior to which the narrator, Alastair's school-friend, has seemed the likelier suitor; and it is nearly ended before the marriage achieves the prospect of success by way of agreement that migration should be across not the Border but the Atlantic. The difference between these bald sentences and the book's "importance" is the measure of its author's skill.

Doubtless the characters in *Indian Ink*, including its pivot, the Babu Krupasindhu, are fictional. But what is the story of his career, of his achievement of wealthy retirement, but an excuse to show us the Indian scene and character; the gulf between Indian ways and British; the bedrock of common sense in the Babu

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MACMILLAN

that gives him loyalty, probity, cruelty and rascality? Critics have found the book fascinating, amusing, enchanting, pleasant. It is all of them but—it is well titled. Black as Indian ink are the revelations not only of corruption but of established customs—of child-marriage, or moneylending and its enslavement. What chance, after all, had the British handful who ruled India? I find, on reflection, that it is distinctly shocking that I enjoyed the book, smiled over it, so much.

The theme of *The Tortoise and the Hare* is very simple too, but, stripped of Elizabeth Jenkins's adornment, not over-credible. That is, I find it difficult to understand just how and why the brilliant lawyer could abandon his attractive, sensitive young wife for the efficient, grasping, physically unattractive and not young Miss Silcox. But I am bound to say that in the reading I was little conscious of my doubts—indeed, the book's point is that the wife cannot believe in the threat to her happiness, though I

think that her young son's character should have warned her that something was very wrong with her grudging, selfish husband. These central characters are most clearly drawn, the subordinate figures less so. The more concentrated the narrative, the more firmly the book grips. My guess is that women-readers will angrily enjoy it.

If *Indian Ink* is scarcely a novel, *The Doctors* is one still less. Its characters no doubt are fictional, and its narrator-hero's love-affairs and friendships have their bearing upon his account of his medical-studentship in a Paris hospital. The hospital and slum scenes are so realistic (though I don't myself much care for wanton plain-speaking about disease and anatomy) that the book is bound to be called "powerful." It is very well translated by Oliver Coburn. I wonder who decided, and why, that two volumes of the French original were enough for the English taste. The reader who disregards my warning that this is hardly a novel may feel that he has been treated almost contemptuously, so abruptly ill-chosen is its ending.

It is a relief as well as, on the whole, a surprise to find Rhys Davies in almost flippant mood, or at any rate kindly amused by his theatrical theme. His Guy Aspen is young, very handsome, no actor, gifted with a flair for a facile tune, born surely to succeed, and yet with a little of the poet somewhere in him. His mother, no less theatrical, is given to oratorios and cadging. He has two circles of devotees—his great "matinee" public, and also the narrow group that see through whilst yet in a fashion they truly love him. Of this group the principal is Judith Cottar, whom chance and a Danish photographer bring to Guy's life and service. It is a story of paint and pasteboard in which characters, important only because they entertain, are shrewdly observed. What slightly tarnishes the realism of *The Painted King* is that in its success and failure, birth and death seem almost as theatrically arranged as the theme on which they are hung.

I have no idea whether *General from the Jungle* has a historical basis. It tells with the ruthless candour to be expected

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HARRAP

NOVELS

from B. Traven (and his translator Desmond L. Vesey) how a little army—save the mark—of Indians marched out of Mexico's southern jungles crying "Land and Liberty," and how, matching cruelty with cruelty, they fought the Dictator's trained and disciplined forces. It is a story of ruthless action illumined by character sketches or, in the case of two of the rebel leaders, almost portraits. The actors in the savage drama are so foreign to our ideas that it is hard to do more than watch, where, to get the full effect, we ought to share at least an echo of their emotions. Yet it is to the strangeness of its scenes and types that the book owes much of its grim interest.

Henry Wade is the most conscientious of detective-story writers, particularly accurate in his presentation of police procedure. *Gold is our Grave* shows him just as true-to-life in his details of crime, whether fraud or murder. Some readers may consider him the victim of his scruples, feeling that his characters tend to lack life and sympathy and so his book to become an abstract exercise. This would be a great overstatement. The characters are realistic if unsensational. They are right for the roles they have to play. And it certainly cannot be denied that the book's ending is bold and original even if it suggests that in Henry Wade's own opinion it is the puzzle that chiefly matters.

MILWARD KENNEDY.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *The Complete Work's* (Odhams. 25s.), edited by Prof. C. J. Sisson, with various helping hands, is a splendid achievement, and it includes *Sir Thomas More*. An invaluable edition for student and general reader.

* * *

Collected Poems (Macmillan. 15s.) by James Stephens comprises the volume of 1926 with some textual corrections, and other verses, some of which had not appeared previously in book form. Stephens had a delightful, unpredictable muse.

* * *

The Answers (Deutsch. 35s.) by Ernst von Salomon is an English version of the best-selling *Fragebogen*, which is not printed in full here. Disturbing and highly readable, as a picture of post-war Germany.

* * *

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt went on a tour of inspection and her conclusions are printed in *India and the Awakening East* (Hutchinson. 15s.). They are pleasant, humane, and inevitably superficial.

* * *

The story of how Mr. James A. Wechsler, editor of the *New York Post*, stood up to Senator McCarthy and defeated him is told in *The Age of Suspicion* (Deutsch. 16s.). It is a remarkable plea for tolerance and the end of witch hunts.

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waste, by a German, Robert Jungk.

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E. G.

Financial

London Gold Market

By JOHN B. WOOD

THE ease and speed with which London resumed its traditional position as the leading international market for gold has amazed even admirers of the City. After being shut for nearly fifteen years, the bullion dealers began business again at 10.30 a.m. on March 22, and were soon dealing in several tons of gold a day. At one stage turnover was reported to be about £1 million daily.

Of course, London has advantages as a centre for this business. It is the natural intermediary between customers spread all over the world, and the producers in the sterling countries, of which South Africa is by far the most important. Even so, that none of the new markets which have sprung up during and since the war has been able to take London's place is a tribute to the efficiency of the market here. The margin between buying and selling an ounce of gold, for which the official price used to be £12 8s., is about 1d. One cannot deal so "finely" in Amsterdam, Zurich or Hong Kong.

Six institutions run the gold market. Four are specialized bullion firms—Johnson Matthey and Co., Mocatta and Goldsmid, Pixley and Abell, and Sharp and Wilkins. Then Samuel Montagu and Co. and N. M. Rothschild and Sons, who are bankers, also take a hand. Representatives from these six firms meet every morning at 10.30 in Rothschild's building in New Court, near the Bank of England, and together they "fix" a price, in the light of their orders to buy and to sell. On the first day the price was "fixed" at 248s. 6d. per fine ounce—just 6d. higher than the Bank of England's

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old official price. Since then the price has been as low as 248s. 3d., and as high as 248s. 10d.

In theory, there is no ceiling to the price. If a flight from currencies developed again in the same manner as has happened since the war, then the demand for gold would send its price rocketing. It is not very long since many people overseas were ready to pay the equivalent of 380s. for an ounce of gold. The Bank of England must have decided that most governments in future should be able to maintain confidence in their currencies.

At the other end of the scale, however, the "floor" to the gold price is set by the United States Treasury's obligation to buy all gold offered to it at \$35 per fine ounce. Allowing for the cost of transport, and for presenting the gold in the form in which the American authorities will accept it, this means that when gold can be bought in London for 247s., it is worth flying it to New York. This would

be done with plane loads of £5,000 bars, about the size of a small brick.

More interesting than the mechanics of the market, however, is the question of what light the re-opening throws on the Government's intentions for the future of sterling, in particular on the policy of convertibility. In its original announcement, the Treasury went out of its way to emphasize that the re-opening of the gold market (and the drastic revision of the geography of exchange control which took place at the same time), "will afford no additional element of convertibility." Technically this is true. Steps have been taken to prevent anyone using this new freedom to buy dollars with sterling through gold. Though anyone may sell in the market, residents (or "inmates" as they have recently been called) of the sterling area can still only buy gold under the same very special conditions as before. But, as all commentators pointed out, we are over two more hurdles on the way to convertibility as a result of the changes of March 22. Rumours that another attempt at full convertibility will be made later this year have once again revived.

Officially, however, the re-opening of the gold market is regarded as another step in the gradual process of freeing the commodity markets, which has had such success in the last two years. Certainly the scheme for gold is similar in some ways to those in cocoa, tea, wheat and non-ferrous metals. London merchants are able once more to earn commissions through their trading activities, while foreigners are prevented from using the markets as a short cut to dollars, at our expense.

Again, the timing of the move is similar to the procedure adopted in other commodity schemes. The Bank of England has waited until the premium in the free markets over the official price has practically run off before freeing the London gold market. In other schemes great care has always been taken to make sure that the market will be "orderly" after being freed, and that no dramatic changes in price should follow liberalization.

An English Coxswain



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LONDON GOLD MARKET

In gold, we should not have been able to take this step towards the pre-war system without the help of Russia. The U.S.S.R. has been selling large quantities of gold to European countries since last autumn. As a result the "black market" price has almost disappeared. There is no doubt that the London market has already dealt in gold from this source, and will handle much more.

But because the City does not look on this operation merely as the revival of another commodity market, it was taken a little by surprise by the first news. We did not then know that Britain's balance of payments had improved so much in the last half of 1953. Nor did we know that gold and dollars were flooding into the reserves in such a spectacular way during March.

Since the re-opening of the gold market, the rate quoted for sterling against dollars in London has moved in our favour, and the transferable rate, now covering most

of the world except the sterling area and the dollar countries, has also strengthened contrary to expectations. It seems clear that Britain's position is stronger than the critics will allow. By re-opening the gold market the authorities have confirmed their confidence in the country's progress, and have won new respect for sterling in the business centres of the world.

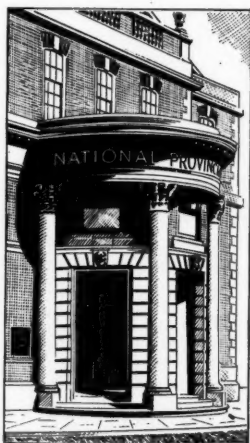
JOHN B. WOOD.

RECORD REVIEW

By ALEC ROBERTSON

Orchestral

WHEN Decca issued recordings of Vaughan Williams's "London" and "Pastoral" Symphonies in September 1952 and July 1953 respectively, we did



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not know that they intended to complete the whole cycle of our great composer's symphonies, all of them played, as in the case of the two mentioned above, by the L.P.O., under Sir Adrian Boult, with Vaughan Williams supervising; but now, with the issue of Nos. 4, 5 and 6, this great project has been publicised. The *Sea Symphony* (announced for May) and *Antartica* are soon to follow. At the end of the *Sixth Symphony* Vaughan Williams has recorded a well deserved and characteristically expressed tribute to conductor and orchestra in which he says that "the playing in general is so clear that all my faults came to the surface: I hope a few virtues have come out as well." He can rest assured that the magnificent series appears in these barren years like a chain of mountain peaks, challenged only by the seven symphonies of Sibelius, Boult stands in relation to Vaughan Williams much as Beecham does to

Delius; and that means that the violent and stormy moods of No. 4, the meditative calm of No. 5, and the enigmatic No. 6, violent and dissonant again, but closing with a wraith-like Epilogue like the music of a devastated world, are all perfectly realized in these splendid performances. The reproduction of each of the symphonies is extremely good (No. 4, LXT2909; No. 5, LXT2910; No. 6, LXT2911).

This month offers a feast of modern concertos. Tortelier plays Elgar's Cello Concerto (accompanied by Sargent and the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra) with perhaps less understanding than Pini on Decca LX3023, but the performance of the beautiful work is good and, as regards orchestral detail, better recorded than the Decca (H.M.V. BLP1043).

At last, we have a good recording of Bartok's Violin Concerto, superlatively well played by Menuhin, accompanied by Furtwängler and the Philharmonia Orchestra (H.M.V. ALP1121), and, with the same orchestra under Goossens, a very fine performance of Khachatourian's Violin Concerto by Igor Oistrakh, the very talented son of a great violinist, who recorded the same work for Decca some years ago. The music is, to my mind, rather small beer (or should one say vodka?) but it is melodious and skilfully laid out; one of those works which, in the hands of a virtuoso, sounds better than it really is (Columbia 33CX1141).

Those who enjoyed Frank Martin's *Petite Symphonie Concertante* (Decca LXT2631), one of the masterpieces of our time, will find his Harpsichord Concerto equally attractive. The soloist is Isabelle Nef, accompanied by small orchestra (Oisean-Lyre OL53001). It is a charming work.

On April 5 Toscanini laid down his baton for the last time—or, to be more exact, dropped it as he ended the *Meister-singer* prelude—and left the concert hall without returning to acknowledge the clapping and cheering of the audience, an old and tired man at the end of a great career. The moving account of this historic event in *The Times* of April 6 lends a special interest to the two record-

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Record Review

ings by the great conductor issued this month, Beethoven's 7th Symphony and Schubert's C Major (H.M.V. ALP1119 and ALP1120). In these there is no sign of failing vitality. The recording, in both cases, is good.

Chamber Music

There used to be complaints that the Lener Quartet played with too consistently sweet a tone and so diminished the stature of the late Beethoven string quartets, though it was generally conceded they were admirable in Mozart. Precisely the same criticism has been levelled (and justly) at the Italian Quartet, and their ultra-refinement is certainly only in place in the slow movement (the one with the *Rasamunde* tune) of Schubert's A minor quartet, op. 29 (issued this month on Decca LXT2854), but not in the remaining movements. On the other hand, they play two Mozart quartets (F major (K590) and D major (K155)) with considerable charm on Decca LXT2852. The recording is excellent.

Splendid Mozart playing comes from the Amadeus group in the glorious C major quintet (K515), which can be confidently recommended to all lovers of chamber music (H.M.V. ALP1125).

Opera

Monteverdi's *Ballo dell'Ingrate*, a combination of opera and ballet based on a moral tale of the fate of those women who are hard hearted in love, and produced during Mantua's opera week (the first in musical history) in 1610, is recorded by a group of Italian artists on Vox PL8090. It is a very good performance, and if the first side contains some dull matter the whole of the second side, which includes the ballet-music and a most poignant lament by one of the *ingrate* cast into hell, has on it some of Monteverdi's most beautiful music.

ALEC ROBERTSON.

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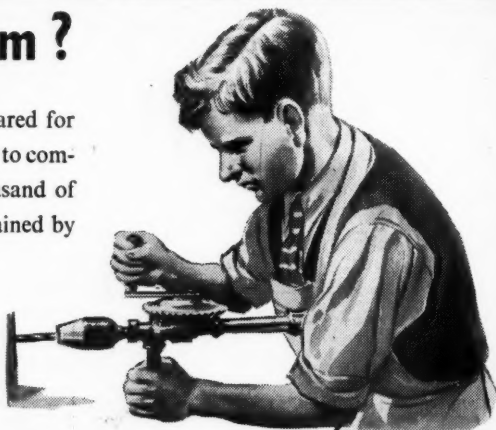


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